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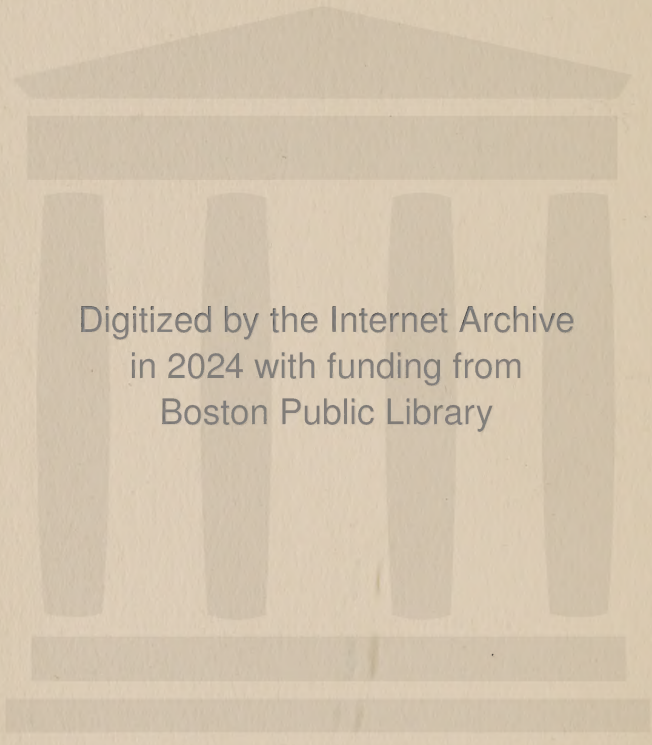
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WANDA FRAIKEN NEFF

LONE VOYAGERS

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
Boston and New York
1929

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TO

MY FATHER

AND ALL WHO CARE FOR

INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE

'Looking forth by light
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.'

WORDSWORTH

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LONE VOYAGERS

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CHAPTER I

THE GREAT MAN

The great man stood beside the statue of Pallas Athena, a gift from the State lumber king to the parlor of the new Women's Building of Chippewa University. Beside the gleaming marble, the lecturer, by contrast even shorter and dumpier in his tight frock coat, from which his fat little legs protruded like substantial pillars, stood with his hands clasped awkwardly behind him, his eyes downcast. At his right nodded daffodils and narcissi, concealing the water pitcher on a table flanked by a sofa and chairs in dull blue upholstery. The dark oak panels of the room, the expensive rugs and hangings formed a rich background for a visitor whose vocation has been conventionally associated with poverty and self-discipline.

The main portion of the spacious room was filled with folding chairs brought in for the lecture. Those in front were occupied by professors in the philosophy, physics, mathematics, astronomy, and German departments, to whom the coming of Denbroch meant possibly the greatest event in their lives. They leaned forward, an almost painful eagerness in their faces, to catch the first precious word. Behind them were the lower orders of academic archangels, other scientists, and beyond a lesser hierarchy, young men in history, in literature, and even in the classics, who like Bacon take all knowledge for their province. Mixed with these lesser ones was a sprinkling of women teaching in the University. They,

too, were determined to follow the great man of their century.

On the sofas against the wall sat the wives of the professors, wearing bright spring hats and white kid gloves in honor of the distinguished guest. They had taken upon themselves the arrangements for the lecture, had bought the flowers, grouped the furniture artistically, provided refreshments. Now they sat back at their ease, reverently attentive, but less tense than their husbands.

Denbroch tossed back his shaggy, grizzled hair, raised colorless eyes obscured behind thick spectacles, began to hiss out rapid German words. A hush fell over the crowded room.

'For many centuries,' he began, 'Newton's beautifully simple formulæ of an orderly universe have held men's imaginations; and rightly so. They satisfied, and still satisfy, for the solution of all usual and practical problems of astronomy and physics.'

Among the women instructors sat Janet Norton of the philosophy department. In contrast to her three friends seated near her, Mary Giddings, Sarah Leighton, and Eleanor Phillips in unadorned felt hats and street clothes, she presented an unacademic frivolity. Her green dress harmonized with the spring colors outside, and her hat, green too, simple but expensive imported felt with a touch of brick-red velvet, gave her considerable inward satisfaction. She was the person in the room whom a stranger would have noticed first, the possessor of an exotic type of beauty consisting of a brown skin of an almost coppery sheen, dark hair with red undertones, a nose delightfully crinkled, saved from insipidity by a faint wave, and eyes that her hat and gown changed from topaz to green.

With the aid of a year spent in Germany, Janet Norton arranged the lecturer's opening sentence neatly in her mind.

'Very recently, however'— the great man waved his hand, the fingers brushing the flowers on the table — 'certain very delicate experiments have shown that Newtonian values are only approximations somewhat too simple for the world in which we live, a world whose physical constitution now pre-

sents a terrifying complexity. Newton's assumptions that time is a continuous flow, that mass remains unchanged by speed or heat, that the solar system consists of bodies lying within the same plane, must all be modified.'

The concluding words had the tolling melancholy of some great bell. The old order was giving place to new. All the settled laws of the textbooks confronted in early youth were torn away. This, Janet guessed, was the fresh world of modern thought.

One of the ladies on the sofa, a lady with a bright pink face, nodded, looked pleasant.

'We are obliged now to modify these laws when considering bodies with very high velocities approaching the speed of light. Such bodies may be found in the great universe of fixed stars and in the tiny yet equally complex world of electrons and protons we have discovered within the atom.'

Directly in Janet's line of vision obtruded a familiar battered black hat, with an untidy fringe of gray hair sticking out from under it. It belonged to Mrs. McIntosh, wife of the biology professor, a partner in her husband's experiments, who had urged Janet to hear Denbroch. She distrusted all philosophy without a foundation of pure science. A year ago she had made Janet distrust it. Janet, then immersed in the æsthetic ethical theories of the third Earl of Shaftesbury, out of which she hoped to make a Doctor's dissertation satisfactory to professor Page, the head of her department, was at the same time forced to be sufficiently up-to-date to teach the history of philosophy down through James, Bergson, Dewey, Russell, and Whitehead. 'If a woman has the presumption to teach philosophy,' scolded Mrs. McIntosh, 'she has to be as good as a man. She ought to be better.' Accordingly she led Janet into her husband's laboratory to brush up on recent developments; even took time off from her own research to guide her. 'Now go back to your William James and your Bergson,' commanded Mrs. McIntosh. But biology had given Janet little help with the philosophers who twisted her up in physics and mathematics. Professor Whitehead's 'Concept of Nature.' That terrible book!

And now this man, before whom all contemporary philosophy bowed. 'The complex world of the atom.' A twinkle of fun brightened the face of the speaker; he shifted his weight, cleared his throat, plunged into the dizzy new realms into which he was carrying the thinkers of his generation. The front row, which had up to now remained motionless, stirred. Mrs. McIntosh scowled, bent forward, propping her head with a bony hand. Janet felt herself going, stumbled, fell, tried to pick herself up again. Too late. The lecturer raced on, his grizzled mane shaking up and down with each torrent of wheezing German words. Down, down, into the unfathomable; deep, dark, not a ray of light. The great man had now turned his back upon the world of babes and was talking to his brother scientists.

Janet sat back, closed her eyes for a moment. How little this defeat mattered now! Beside her own great new adventure, all systems of thought sank into insignificance. Four months ago when Professor Page had sent her to the new lecturer in the English department, an eighteenth-century scholar from Harvard who might give her some illumination concerning the Earl of Shaftesbury, the problems of philosophy, she thought, completely absorbed her. But even the first day that she saw Keith Lamberton, the dignified gentleman with the Boston accent, tall, thin, a little stooping, with reserved eyes shining unexpectedly with a glint of humor, the Earl of Shaftesbury and his moral system floated off a little distance, mocked her attempts to reseat them in the first place in her mind.

Keith had been wise not to come. He said his German wasn't good enough. Perhaps it was that. The announcement of their engagement had appeared in last evening's papers. Better to have it over all at once. Everybody knowing. But here alone, facing them without Keith, just because she attempted to follow in the wake of modern thought — Mary, Sarah, Eleanor — the group of delightful friends who met daily for luncheon in the corner of the undergraduate women's dining-room reserved for faculty members — what

would they think? All of them foes to marriage. Janet throwing herself on the scrap-heap by marrying. A successful teacher — and in philosophy, too, which women weren't supposed to bother with, and never really understood — Janet, lucid, enthusiastic, swinging easily from Plato to Dewey, giving up all that for the confused meanderings of Keith Lamberton's mental machinery. 'And you with so clear a mind,' her friends had often assured her.

'Too clear for philosophy, perhaps,' she retorted after she knew Keith. His speculations had first taught her to doubt herself, her mind. And now Denbroch. Sitting here, unable to follow the great thinker of his age. Was he philosopher, mathematician, physicist? Those boundaries all shattered, it seemed. A year in Germany, knowledge of his language meant nothing. All the hours in Professor McIntosh's laboratory, late in the day when she was already tired from her classes, nothing — come to nothing. Philosophy turned science. It had come so suddenly — this new way — one must know everything.

Janet glanced furtively toward Mary Giddings next to her, Mary staring straight before her, her sallow face and scraped-back hair making her look as if she ought to understand, even if she didn't. Right after the lecture Mary would be sure to say something. She would see a friend in mid-career tired of her own ambitions, a kind of tight-rope dancer who had suddenly leaped off into space. Mary would say that she had got dizzy and lost her balance. Poor Mary!

Of course the real marvel had been that Keith should have wanted to marry her, should have wanted to marry any one. He had required considerable encouragement. Janet had to admit that. There were times when she had called herself a fool for cherishing vain longings to be the wife of a man so exclusively interested in the delighted cultivation of his own mind. But in the end the miracle had happened.

Outside the window the oak trees on the knoll were still draped with their tender spring green. She and Keith together following the spring, unlike all other springs. Love like a

warm, enveloping cloak, like a cool breeze, like a dash of rain on parched fields.

They — Mary and the rest — they had said enough before they knew. They admired the cultivated Mr. Lamberton. They would even admit the odd appeal of his whimsicality. It was not Keith as a person. No one — not even Mary could — but as a husband for Janet.

'That man's no more conscious of an audience than a Sphinx,' Mary had said after a week spent in Keith's seminar in eighteenth-century English literature a year ago, when he had come directly from Harvard to the banks of the Mississippi. Mary, grinding away steadily toward a Ph. D., had no time to tumble around in this new man's brush-encumbered bypaths of eighteenth-century ideas. 'He doesn't know where he's going,' Mary had then announced bitterly. 'That limping — faltering — pathetic creature.'

Janet remembered every word. And now this was the person Janet Norton was going to marry the first day she was free from examinations. How little everything else mattered, what the great man was saying, what one's friends were thinking — saying.

Janet was roused from her reverie by a dramatic description. The famous eclipse; Denbroch's prediction verified; rays of light are bent slightly when passing the sun. 'Light itself is subject,' he proceeded, 'to some kind of gravitational pull; and the uniform motion in a straight line, of which Newton spoke so confidently, becomes naïve assumption. Equally so his conception of a continuous flow of time. Because of these gravitational pulls, lines of physical force, geodesics, are slightly curved; and the universe is consequently a closed system, not infinite, but finite.'

As the word 'finite' was pronounced, the door behind Pallas Athena opened mysteriously. The eyes of the faculty wives turned quickly. In the adjoining parlor were gathered, Janet knew from experience, the hostesses for the afternoon, waiting to rush in with the tea-things at a nicely adjusted moment coinciding with the last word of the lecturer.

The voice boomed forth once more. The door closed

'The celestial bodies in the planetary system do not lie in the same plane.' Vectors and vector mathematics. Mass varying with velocity. Janet caught at stray phrases in the sentences flitting past her.

'Imagine a clock placed upon a swiftly moving bit of matter,' suggested the great man, smiling like a benign supernatural being visiting a mortal race of men. But it was no use. A little while ago it had been two cars on a road, one rapid, one slow. Was the listener in the car, or on the road? A ray of light substituted for the car. No, she couldn't grasp it. Relative velocity.

'Time moves not in a continuous flow, but in lumps,' he was saying.

A second time the door behind Pallas Athena opened slowly; eyes raced to it; it closed again.

'Light reaches us not in waves, but in jumps. Here we approach something close to Newton's long-abandoned corpuscular theory.'

Electric bells rang once, twice, long raucous peals. Four o'clock classes were over. Students passed by on the sidewalk in front of the Women's Building. There was loud talk, laughter. The faculty ladies — Mary Giddings' term to distinguish mere wives from the women teaching in the University — retained an attentive placidity. Of course not a word he had said mattered to them. If it had, they couldn't look that way. Doors slammed. The men in the front row were annoyed, leaned closer toward the speaker. They had lost something. Men with gray hair, men famous on the Chippewa campus, hanging on to every word of this fat little German, like children hearing a fairy tale.

Denbroch had been speaking almost an hour. The tea-cups in the adjoining room clattered in warning. The faculty ladies looked from one to the other. Surely, their expression signified, he must be done soon.

At last the quantum theory. Regions of higher mathema-

tics. Mary Giddings, star pupil in arithmetic in a prairie country school, at the top of her algebra and geometry classes in the small town high school, one of the few women in the University to keep on with mathematics through the differential calculus, clutched desperately at the tough words running past her. Tensor calculus a few moments ago. Did that belong with the quantum theory? She couldn't tell. She read German easily enough, but seldom heard the spoken language. With great agony of concentration her mind had kept pace with the earlier part of the lecture. Now she was conscious of blanks, small rents at first, growing larger and larger until yawning holes reduced her to more and more helpless stupefaction. She was no expert in philosophy like her friend Janet, but the men said that if one had a mathematical turn, there was much in Professor Denbroch one could follow. And she, proud of her possession of the differential calculus, was utterly defeated. No need to try any longer.

'The laws of the locomotion of primates — primates change spacetime system.' Mary was conscious of the words crashing against her dizzy head. More words. Not a glimmer of understanding.

A wave of anger rushed over her. She, who from childhood had been tormented by a hunger for knowledge; in that country school reaching out for it; getting ahead of her brothers, getting ahead of all the rest of the high school, holding her own at the University. And now ——

Beside her glowed the soft green colors of Janet's dress. Immediately she transferred her rage to her friend. It was all Janet's fault. Janet and her news intruding upon this hour, Janet and her love affairs. Try as she would, Mary couldn't dismiss Janet's engagement from the back of her mind. She ought to have guessed how it would be. Janet had never been able to get along without men. Last year it was that simpering Guy Hardy of the philosophy department, who took her to the Faculty Club dances. She ought to have measured her friend's frivolity then, her interest in clothes, fashions. No mental depth. And now she was getting married. Getting

married and keeping other women from devoting their minds exclusively to the Denbroch lecture.

Just like all women. Fools — all women were fools. Mary's thin lips spread out into a hard line of derision. Why was Denbroch lecturing in the Women's Building, squeezed between marble statues and daffodils, his wisdom mixed up with tea and cakes? Desecration. But women were always meddling in men's important affairs. The men, left to themselves, would have asked Denbroch to address them in the physics lecture-room behind the long demonstration table, with a stretch of blackboard for diagrams. That was where he belonged. With the help of those diagrams perhaps she might have followed what he was saying. But here ——

Denbroch had finished speaking. He slouched uneasily before his audience during the hush which followed his last word. Then the faculty ladies did the proper thing. At the restrained, white-gloved applause, Janet searched for a glimmer of malice in the eyes behind thick spectacles. Was it all a joke to him — holding them there for over an hour while he babbled of the ineffable mysteries he knew well enough were for such as they?

Janet watched her chief, Professor Page, shake hands with the visitor. The German department, *allesamt,* moved toward their illustrious countryman. The physicists crowded together to explain to each other what he had been saying. The folding chairs were carried out, sofas, chairs, tables rearranged, and then the faculty ladies in a procession carried in the refreshments.

Janet's heart gave a little flop which left her breathless as Mary turned toward her. 'I suppose you, being a philosopher, followed our great man,' she began.

Janet shook her head. 'I'm no physicist, Mary, and therefore no great shakes as a philosopher.' She might as well adopt an heroic tone, let Mary know that only marriage would save her from publicly acknowledging to resolute Mrs. McIntosh and the other intellectual females of the Chippewa planet that she wasn't equal to Denbroch.

'Is that why you're deserting us? Because you decided you weren't the modern she-philosopher?'

It was coming now —— She must brace herself for it, as for a huge wave soon to topple over her.

'Where is he? Not attending you at the romantic moment?'

'He said his German wasn't equal to it.'

'You know what I think. When a woman's any good — and then —— '

'Are you congratulating me on my engagement, Mary?' Janet laughed.

Mary Giddings was consistently hostile to the holy bonds of wedlock. Loudly and steadily she proclaimed her position. If she saw a man she was afraid she was going to fall in love with, she'd run as fast as she could in the opposite direction. She'd worked too hard, year after year, to throw away all she had labored to conquer for any mere man.

'I'll go on just the same,' Janet hastened to assure her friend. 'A husband won't change me. I'll have more time to do what I want.'

Mary only groaned. 'Why,' she pondered, 'why do women like you want to marry?'

Janet was defeat for the sex. Before the brief, casual courtship of a man immersed in his studies, interrupting them only long enough to claim the most attractive woman on his horizon as a companion in his moments of despair, a silent partner in his learned works, a trafficker in the practical affairs of life not always avoidable in the single state — before such slight temptation she had made an easy capitulation. All this Janet read in the troubled depths of the grey eyes gleaming out of the leathery plain face beside her.

Mary, grim, staccato, bobbed out of her seat and looked dangerously hostile toward the professors' wives gathered around the samovar.

'You'll belong with that crowd now,' she said, in a tone like croaking fate. 'With the ladies.'

Janet glanced from her own group in their business-like

clothes, and with shiny noses — why couldn't they dash on a dab of powder before they rushed away from their last classes? Like sparrows they were, to the tropical plumage waving over the tea-table.

'They'll claim you,' prophesied Mary, turning to her colleagues, who were now spreading out into a half-circle to accept tea from the hostesses.

One of them, tall, handsome like a Spanish woman, passed her eyes down the curved line, and pounced upon Janet. 'Miss Norton, isn't it?' Janet, blushing under Mary's sardonic triumph, felt herself pulled gently forward. 'I've wanted to meet you. Of course, we're all so delighted to hear the good news. And Professor Lamberton such a confirmed bachelor. At least so we thought.'

Beyond the smiling stranger Janet observed Mrs. McIntosh, in a black dress that hung bunchily upon a spare frame, join the German department and Professor Page, encircling the distinguished visitor. One could hear her voice, high-pitched, resonant, above the polite feminine murmur.

'Mrs. McIntosh probably followed Denbroch,' Janet ventured to Mary.

'I'll wager she's the only female among us who did.'

Mrs. McIntosh, in a very bad but fluently sibilating German, was throwing eager questions at the little man. He was laughing, gesticulating in curves, bisecting arcs, bobbing his head up and down.

Professor McIntosh, a handsome red-headed Scotchman, next joined his wife and added questions to hers. When a cup of tea was held out to her, she shook her head violently and went on talking. Mary Giddings snorted. The German began to use his spoon to make more curves and squares an inch or two in front of his parrot nose. Professor Page relieved him of his cup and saucer. Suddenly he turned, became conscious of the room full of people, muttered something to the group holding him, and charged out of the room with his head down, trailed by Professor Page and the

McIntosh pair. Not a dozen people had even touched his hand.

'I'm Mrs. Witherspoon,' the picturesque lady beside Janet finally remembered to explain, when they were left to undisturbed tea-drinking. Janet had already heard her mentioned reverentially. Unlike most faculty wives, she had a fame outside their restricted circle, wrote daring short stories, wrote book reviews for the 'Saint Anthony Gazette,' had a general literary reputation, as had her husband, whose course in criticism was the popular attraction at Chippewa. 'My husband is in your department — that is, your department now. Mr. Witherspoon admires Mr. Lamberton. But he said a wife was just what he needed.' Mrs. Witherspoon looked deliberately arch. She kept a determined hand on Janet's arm, slowly released her from her moorings among her own kind, and conducted her to an expectant group of wives still holding court around the tea-table.

'Mrs. Field — have you met Miss Norton — you know.'

Field — with a lively caper of adjusting memory Janet tried to connect the fussy black-lace gown and feathered hat with something familiar. But that the eccentric head of the music department, the most unusual spectacle of manhood she had yet beheld, should have a wife, was almost too overpowering a revelation.

Mrs. Field's eyes closed, as if she were looking at the sun, or a beatific vision. 'Wasn't he wonderful ?' she gasped.

Janet gathered that the conversation had got around to the speaker of the afternoon.

A plump woman joined them. Ignoring Janet, she began to talk vigorously to the others. 'I wish Dolly McIntosh wouldn't push herself forward so. But she always does at affairs like this. And looking such a sight, too. She probably came straight from the laboratory without even washing her hands.'

'She was the only woman talking to him,' observed Mrs. Field.

The newcomer, suddenly aware of the alien in their midst,

broke off her vilifying speech. She shook hands with Janet. 'You don't know me, my dear. Mrs. Atkins.'

So this woman in a purple velvet gown, a silk chrysanthemum nodding from her shoulder against her ruddy cheeks, was the wife of Atkins, the American historian, who looked, his students said before they fell beneath the spell of his simple and beautiful nature, exactly like a farmer. Mrs. Atkins's name appeared frequently in the college paper, as patroness of something or other. She was very social.

'The rest of us couldn't get near Professor Denbroch,' complained Mrs. Atkins. 'I at least wanted to shake his hand. It would have been something to tell your grandchildren.'

The other ladies laughed. Mrs. Atkins, of course, did not look grandmotherly. There was an Atkins girl, in high school, wearing spectacles. Janet had met her along the river taking walks with her father.

Mrs. Field patted Mrs. Witherspoon's arm. 'You arranged the flowers beautifully, Clare. I never saw this room look so attractive."

'The spring flowers — they're so easy to get the right effects with. But I thought for a moment he was going to tip over those on the table.'

'And the cakes.' Mrs. Atkins reached for one from the table. 'I think Stevensons do the best for us.'

'You wouldn't think to look at him he had all those great thoughts.' Another wife had added herself to the growing bevy of matrons.

'Quite ordinary,' agreed Mrs. Field. 'And smallish.'

Mr. Field was, Janet well knew, a tall man and most extraordinary. So wives philosophize upon men, using husbands like a first principle.

Janet stood wearily first on one foot, then on the other, as more faculty consorts came up to shake hands with her. They all wore an unconcealed knowing look. Evidently her engagement had spread hither and yon. She began to lose count — wife of a man in anthropology — wife of dean of

law school — wife of professor of chemistry — wife of professor of business administration — wife—— The lengthy procession of shades in Hades could scarcely be less without end. In the three years she had been an instructor in Chippewa University, she had met none of them.

From the hot centre of the cordon of strangers Janet looked out and saw Mary Giddings. Over her shoulder Mary tossed a mocking grin, waved her hand in farewell. Her old friend was lost to her, claimed by the wives. It needed no guessing to interpret her parting salute. The new life had begun.

CHAPTER II

FACULTY ROW

1

A TAXI stopped in front of the last of a row of brick houses next to the Chemistry Building. Keith and Janet Lamberton, after two months of camp life in the North Woods, were returning to Chippewa. In the quiet of a late summer afternoon they hurried up the walk toward the rambling old dwelling. In its setting of oak trees, with a low sun striking against its mellow red walls, it seemed an intimate part of that beautiful moment of life known to the newly married, taking possession of their first home.

'This is the best of all,' Janet whispered to her husband as he unlocked the heavy oak door — 'coming home.'

With his arm closed about her, they stood in a long embrace, kissed each other in the dark hallway. 'My darling,' Keith was saying, 'you must promise to be very happy here with me.'

From the upper regions a voice called down to them. They had forgotten Mrs. Peterson, entrusted with the preparations for their arrival. 'Here already ? I wasn't expectin' ye so early.' A fluttering figure in blue calico appearing on the landing pounded down the stairs.

Keith had taken his arm from Janet's shoulder. At once he tried to appear the respectable, brisk householder.

'A happy life. The start of a happy life to ye both,' began Mrs. Peterson with the readiness of expression which years of washing and ironing for 'University people' had brought her. She took a certain pride in her academic connections. Her newest patrons she now examined with approval. 'I did the best I could,' she explained. 'If I could o' got all

them boxes unpacked, it would o' looked better. But I didn't want to take the liberty.' She led them into the living-room. 'Kind o' empty yet.'

Janet viewed a large room with a high ceiling, dingy woodwork and unmanageable inner shutters. It was furnished as yet only with a badly faded blue rug which she had moved from one lodging to another, her old wicker chairs, and the piano, a good one, which Keith had rescued from a colleague discouraged with paying for it on the instalment plan. She saw the room, however, not in its present bareness, but transformed by her skill. She heard her mother's voice, with the undertone of excitement never quite dispelled by the discipline of being a clergyman's wife, saying, as she viewed each of a succession of dreary parsonages out of which she must make comfort for her family, 'Just you wait until I get my hands on this place.' Now her daughter was saying, 'It's going to be a charming house.' In her lively imagination she was hanging up curtains — yellow they must be for this dark room looking out upon the street and the College of Dentistry — placing Keith's Paris water-colors and Goya sketches on the walls, and planning expeditions to second-hand stores to find a sofa and an easy-chair, whose dingy ugliness might be concealed by slip covers. Her mother's life all over again. Doing wonders with nothing.

'Isn't it wonderful?' Janet murmured to Keith as they crossed the hall to look at the dining-room. 'All this spaciousness for the two of us. After being stuck away for years in college rooms and lodgings, to have our own home!'

Behind Mrs. Peterson's back they clasped hands rapturously.

Janet's imagination was now bewitching the dining-room, equipped with tables and chairs bought cheap from Keith's departing colleague, Professor Allison. There were preparations advertised to perform the miraculous with worn furniture. She must buy a deep red rug, put red curtains at the windows to contrast with the black woodwork.

'Kind o' empty,' croaked Mrs. Peterson, shut out of Janet's dreams, and viewing actuality.

Once in his study, Keith was content to examine his home no further. It was this room that had convinced him of the wisdom of renting the house, which at first view appeared unmanageable for two people. The solid oak shelves constructed to hold without sagging the weighty law books of Judge Seeley, the former occupant, the heavy doors shutting out footsteps in the hall, seemed providentially adapted to his needs. It was like a mediaeval fortress, snugly secure against an invading world. Morever, the windows gave an expansive view of oak trees, the chief glory of the Chippewa campus, which somewhat obscured the concrete walls of the new stadium.

Keith measured the rows of boxes which almost filled the room, touched each with his foot in greeting, flopped down in the leather-seated swivel chair in front of his desk. This bulky article of furniture he had discovered in a second-hand shop on Washington Avenue shortly after he became engaged. He had never before seen a desk so large, so long as this one, with so endless a succession of drawers. In spite of its scarred condition, he bought it immediately and considered the most important part of his home furnished. 'It looks better than ever,' he boasted, his eyes resting lovingly upon it, 'I'm going to get a lot of work done here. I don't suppose there is time now to get started unpacking the books.'

Mrs. Peterson winked at Janet. 'That's the way with all o' them. Books — that's all they think of.'

Janet ran lightly up to the second floor, glanced into the two empty rooms which Keith's Harvard friend, Pierce Hadley, newly appointed lecturer in English, was to occupy, went up to the third floor to examine Mary Giddings's slant-walled domain. Together the lodgers paid the rent of the Seeley house. Without them, Keith couldn't have had the home he wanted.

Returning to the lower floor, she entered Keith's and her bedroom. The open windows looked out upon luxuriant

tree-tops. The robins — she could see them hopping from one branch to another — were beginning quavering repetitions of a sleepy chorus. Long shadows lay over the stretch of grass across the way. She could hear the distant whirr of a lawn-mower, the splash of water from a hose. This was home. She walked up and down the room, planned that the bed, another Allison purchase, would be painted a deep cream, almost yellow, with green trimmings, her favorite colors; that her dressing-table and Keith's chest of drawer's would be also cream and green. Cretonne curtains with a yellow poppy design, chair cushions, yellow rugs on floors painted a cool green, completed her beautiful harmony. It would be perfect. Dropping down upon the bed, she held close to her the beating happiness in her heart. She was going to be very good — never lose her temper — never complain even to herself about having very little money. Just like her mother. Only her mother had got tired sometimes of always being poor.

Keith was coming upstairs, calling her name, taking the wrong direction. She lay very still, waited breathlessly for him to find her.

'Oh, here you are.' He came up to the bed, sat down beside her, rested his head against hers. They fell back against the pillows, standing straight up according to Mrs. Peterson's neat formula. They forgot Mrs. Peterson clattering through the last of her cleaning, forgot the long, hot train journey, the dinner hour which came and went. The Chippewa janitors stopped cutting the grass and went home to supper. The football players practising behind the gray stadium walls returned to training quarters. The children in the red-brick houses a few doors away, called in from their play, were put to bed. The Lambertons, the neighbors said, had come home that afternoon from their honeymoon.

2

Chippewa University, in spite of its situation in the city of Saint Anthony, possessed a cultural seclusion which has

been denied many of the State institutions in the Middle West devoted to higher education. The Mississippi River, making a sudden twist in its serpentine coils, enclosed on two sides the campus and a few neighboring streets; the railroad track furnished a protective boundary on the third.

Within this triangle created by nature and chance, men of learning lived and lectured; students met the stirring adventures of youth; merchants, landladies, quick-lunches, cafeterias, moving-picture theatres fed, clothed, and amused the University colony. The activities of Saint Anthony had an independent existence seldom conflicting with the University. The steel mill, the railroad shops waged industrial battles. Union men picketed their gates; guards with clubs and revolvers protected scab workers. A Pole shot a Russian down on the river flats. But all this was outside Chippewa. The campus, rambling over the high banks of the river, was gradually becoming crowded with buildings. The early days of sober red brick had been succeeded by a middle period of architectural experiment; the brown-stone mediæval fortress of the old Science Building, with truncated towers, the Parthenon simplicity of the Library, the French château elaboration of the Arts Building. The last stage, repeating the first, gave utilitarian red-brick structures with plain copings to the Colleges of Engineering and Medicine.

The faculty, for the most part, lived close to the campus. Full professors, especially those with private incomes, an earning capacity stretching beyond University walls, or wealthy wives, built Colonial or Italian homes along the boulevard of River Road, which overlooked not only the Mississippi and its wooded banks, but also the chimneys of the industrial district. Instructors at the bottom of the salary scale and students working their way through college tended to drift close to the railroad tracks and the steel mill. The intervening space was filled in by the rest of the faculty, the women's dormitory, the fraternities and sororities, and the better class of boarding-houses.

In the midst of the campus, however, on the site of the

projected science buildings, stood a row of red-brick houses which went back to those early days of Saint Anthony when the successful pioneers of the settlement along the upper banks of the river had occupied them. Two years before, the University had bought all the land between Mendota and Chippewa Avenues, and was now waiting for the necessary appropriations from the Legislature to begin building.

Meanwhile the houses, furnished with free heat from a central heating plant, were rented to members of the faculty who did not object to living close to the throbbing heart of an unwieldy giant of learning.

One of these, known to old residents as the Judge Seeley house, Keith and Janet Lamberton had made their abode. In the late summer the campus was a pleasant place. Stillness hung over it like a heavy mist. The students and the hum of business which followed close upon their heels were gone, and the intensity of life had departed with them. Ivy draped the ugly buildings. The lawns were green and cool, the flower borders a brilliant show of color. The restaurants in the neighborhood, which in a few weeks would be unendurable to any human being much over twenty, were clean and inviting, their patrons low-voiced, unobtrusive. Keith and Janet, returning from a leisurely dinner, sat down on the knoll in the heavy shadows of the oak trees to watch the yellow light on the grass turn to purple as a burning sun sank into the river. After a strenuous day of unpacking boxes and boxes of books and shaking a paint-brush over dilapidated furniture, it was good to rest in the cool of evening, stretched out on the soft thickness of grass.

'I never realized before how beautiful the campus was,' Janet said lazily, 'nor how peaceful it could be.'

'It's the students that mess it up,' Keith reminded her. 'They mess everything up. But as yet no one has conceived of a university without them.'

Keith in white flannel trousers and thin blue coat, Janet in a yellow organdy frock, could, for the moment, picture them-

selves owners of spreading green acres shut away from the world.

'Not too rude a jolt from the North Woods, is it?' said Janet, tapping Keith's dignified nose as a diverting midsummer pastime.

But by day the pair labored unceasingly to make a home out of Judge Seeley's creaking dwelling. Keith had been distressed by the departure of Mrs. Peterson, whom he had vaguely imagined a permanent part of their establishment. It had never occurred to him that his wife could do housework. His mother never had. He anticipated a faithful servant from the start. The Scandinavians were good. He'd find one. But Janet delayed his search. Meanwhile her first responsibility was to get the spacious but inconvenient kitchen across the wide hall from Keith's study equipped for her experiments in cooking. Going out to meals was ruinous. That accomplished, she began to paint the bedroom furniture, Keith sleeping on the couch in his study, she doubled up on the living-room sofa, while her dream of cream and green paint upstairs got dry.

Keith's primary interest was his study. He opened boxes, dusted books, arranged and rearranged columns, battalions of books on Judge Seeley's stout shelves. The marriage of Janet's library to his was a triumph.

'Scarcely a duplicate among them,' he chuckled, opening one box after another. 'This is lucky. It seems, really, as if you have all the books I'd planned buying.'

'I'm so glad,' Janet responded, placing a Bergson volume beside Whitehead's 'Science and the Modern World,' and wondering when she would ever have the time to open them again.

'I think I'm going to get a lot of work done here,' Keith went on, casting longing eyes toward the desk in front of which he soon aspired to sit undisturbed. 'I've never had such a peaceful retreat before. You ought to have your desk here too, Janet. Then we could sit working quietly side by side.'

'That's a pretty picture, darling. But not until I get the house a little more settled.'

Into the midst of painting operations, Keith threw unexpected holidays. Too much turpentine, he contended, would disturb even the idyllic perfection of marriage. On such days they explored the strange Saint Anthony territory on the other side of the river. From the middle of Mendota Bridge they looked upon a typical American scene. On their left the banks of the Mississippi were heavily wooded, ending in purple distances; to the right stretched the industrial section of the city. A famous artist visiting Saint Anthony had explained to a university audience why their city was as beautiful in its way as Pittsburg. Entirely disregarding the miles of boulevard and the chain of lakes on whose shores it meant success to dwell, he had congratulated them upon the vision of that industrial water-front at sunset. In the masses of stone and concrete against the water and sky, formed by the old flour mills of rough grey limestone sparingly gashed with windows, and the new grain elevators, changed, with the coming of concrete, into an assemblage of mammoth cylinders like the columns of an Egyptian temple, he found the rare beauty of an American city.

Below them on the river flats stretched a foreign settlement; the squatters' houses, pygmy structures with tiny gardens devoted to chickens, pigs, vegetables, and flower beds marked off with white stones. A wooden church lifted its spire. Women with white kerchiefs over their heads stood in groups in the alley-ways between the houses. Boys in rafts paddled close to the shore. Dogs swam out toward them.

'Now if this were Europe,' Keith said, 'People would come to look at it, characterize it as quaint, picturesque. But here——'

High above this community of Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, was spread out that part of Saint Anthony which, by some joke cities unwittingly play upon themselves, was given over to the working population. The box-like houses set in neat, fenced yards had a view of the river as extensive as that

of River Road; they had in addition easy access to the centre of town. These inexplicable ironies of cities delighted Keith. He and Janet entertained themselves by selecting first one house, with aster beds outlined with conch shells, next another, with a diminutive apple orchard, as their future home.

Then back once more to the smell of paint, bare windows that demanded curtains, empty rooms that must somehow be rendered habitable.

3

'It's too bad for you young married people to start right in taking roomers.' Mrs. Porter looked around the living-room with the lively interest middle-aged women invariably adopt toward brides. 'But of course,' she added quickly, 'It isn't like having strangers — both of them friends that way.'

'And together they pay the rent,' Janet added, with matter-of-fact directness.

Mrs. Porter, large and overdressed, looked embarrassed. Possibly, Janet reflected, she had offended some delicate law of University decorum which forbids direct reference to the practical exigencies of life. Mrs. Porter was her first caller. She was the first caller of everybody at Chippewa, especially of brides and mothers with new babies. Her existence offered few romantic opportunities, and she made the most of what came her way. Her husband, professor of astronomy, a remarkable man, Keith said, but handicapped by an inadequate telescope, was so absorbed in science that she saw almost nothing of him. Her only child had died in infancy. She had taken solace in religion, especially in foreign missions, and she had an irritating way of starting chains of prayer in a community particularly unsympathetic.

Unlike most stupid women, she suspected her unpopularity, saw that people ran away from her whenever they could. There was a vague rumor that she was expected to inherit money some day, a considerable fortune. But probably without more foundation than most rumors, it had been started by some mischievous person to account for Professor Por-

ter's choice of a wife at least ten years his senior, with whom he appeared to have nothing in common.

'I wonder how you'll like keeping house,' Mrs. Porter's eyes made a stealthy circuit of the living-room. Only that morning Janet had hung up her new curtains, yellow cheesecloth, a good color but much too limp. The bow windows and inner shutters had made draperies a perplexing problem. Well, these were cheap, and they'd have to last until she could afford something better.

'Maybe you'll not like housework.' Mrs. Porter, finishing her examination of the curtains, made a fresh start. 'Being a teacher and around so much every day. Maybe it won't come natural.'

Janet tried to smile bright conviction. 'I suppose I'll have to like it,' she said.

Mrs. Porter looked down at her tight white-kid gloves holding her pearl-gray card-case. 'A house — staying in it too much — it gets lonesome sometimes,' she confessed.

An express truck stopped outside. Janet hastily excused herself and superintended the delivery of Pierce Hadley's family furniture from Connecticut. The men lifted bulky crates up the steep back stairs, one after the other, and then shoved and dragged them into the rooms she directed.

'Mr. Hadley will be coming in a few days,' Janet explained when she rejoined Mrs. Porter in the living-room.

'You'll have your hands full enough when things get going. The young women here ——' Her tone had a suggestion of envy. 'They're always doing things. There's always something ——'

During the next few days Janet was ready to believe Mrs. Porter. The doorbell began ringing close to four. The faculty ladies, all of them, it seemed, were calling on the new bride. The elder ones, wives of the deans and heads of departments, evidently considered it good form to be prompt in welcoming a new wife to their University circle. The younger ones explained that they had to come before classes started, while their husbands could stay home with the children. They

told her about the Faculty Wives' Club, with its monthly meeting, which she must join. Some of them belonged to the College Women's Club. One musn't limit one's existence entirely to the University, they thought. Then there was the Politics Association, which trained women in voting. That was a civic duty. If you believed in democracy and equality of women with men in affairs of the State —— Yes, Janet's callers assured her with pleasant smiles, she'd find plenty of activities to fill up her time. Of course they played bridge a good deal. And the Faculty Dancing Club, very pleasant, and dinner parties. It was remarkable the number of engagements one accumulated.

Mrs. Chamberlain and Mrs. Dale, Janet's neighbors in the same row of brick houses, called together. They had been very eager to get acquainted with Mrs. Lamberton, for they also had taught in the University before their marriage. Mrs. Chamberlain, the girlhood in her lively blue eyes still struggling against the stoutness of maternity, had taught bacteriology at Chippewa before she became the wife of Professor Chamberlain, also a bacteriologist, a ruddy-faced gentleman in knickerbockers who passed by the Lamberton house every morning. Mrs. Dale, older and very tired-looking, had met her husband at the Classical School in Rome. But with this preliminary exposition of their scholastic past completed, most of their talk concerned their children. Both had young babies who had safely passed through a hot summer. No one but a mother, they suggested delicately to Janet, realized the relief that came with cool weather. They discussed cold sponge-baths, barley water, woolen bands, and summer complaint in an intimately knowing manner.

In the midst of the callers, Janet's lodgers arrived. Pierce Hadley and Mary Giddings, examining each other up and down in the living-room the night they were first introduced, provided a comedy even Keith appreciated. Mary had never looked more spare or less compromising. Pierce, suave, wearing beautiful clothes unlike anything before seen around Chippewa University, his socks and tie in symphonic tones

of subdued color, bowed low before Miss Giddings.

'I didn't know any one was going to live here but me,' Mary shot out before she fled to her quarters under the roof.

Pierce Hadley started after her. 'One of my colleagues and yours, Keith?'

Trunks bumped into the house, up one, two flights of stairs. Mary pounded up and down, at last was quiet in her attic. The man Pierce had hired to open his boxes made a deafening clatter for almost two days, finally departed.

Janet, going up to Mary's attic to make an evening call, found Mary with her conglomerate array of furniture shoved into place, her trunk unpacked, the photographs of her parents and brothers in a row on her study table, settled to work.

'Thick in it already,' Janet commented, removing some books piled on a chair and seating herself. Mary's books were always in easy reach of their owner.

'The important thing,' philosophized Mary, 'is to get started as quickly as possible.' The two years which Janet had devoted to the neat fastidiousness of Lord Shaftesbury, Mary had given to the grim realism of the poet Crabbe. A farm on the Chippewa prairie and a nearby village had taught her to appreciate a writer who was a country person like herself and knew and sympathized with poor people as she did. With fierce devotion she labored to write a book which would reveal the true greatness of a neglected eighteenth-century poet. 'I got two chapters written this summer,' she announced.

Janet did not hear. She was examining Mary's bare windows. 'What kind of curtains are you going to have?'

'Not going to have any. They shut out light.'

'But this room has so much light.'

'That's what I like about it. I want to keep all there is. — You doing anything on your Shaftesbury? ' she inquired.

Janet's manuscript and notes were, for the time being, carefully packed away in a steamer trunk converted by means of a cretonne cover into a window-seat for her bedroom, now a pleasant harmony of green and yellow.

'I've got to get the house in running order first.'

'Well,' grunted Mary, 'I wouldn't be all house.'

Mary couldn't appreciate the importance of all the preparations for getting settled. In spite of the fact that her bedroom and sitting-room were as cluttered and unlovely as a squirrel's nest, Mary seemed perfectly satisfied. Janet plotted to interest Mary in painting her chairs and tables. If Mary didn't make curtains for her windows, *she* would. The thought that any one in her house should live in such a way was unendurable.

Pierce Hadley's rooms, unlike Mary's, were most satisfactory. Janet was attracted to her husband's friend as soon as she saw the beautiful old chairs, table, sofas transplanted from the house in Connecticut which Pierce's ancestors had built. Instead of losing their serenity by removal, they had brought dignity and repose to a temporary home. They helped him to forget, he explained to her while he was arranging his possessions, that he was a stranger in Chippewa, and brought back something of the stately Georgian house, stranded finally in the midst of a business district and torn down after his mother's death. Her portrait as a young girl hanging over the bookshelves resembled her son. The same distinction and clear eyes.

Mary, peering into Mr. Hadley's sitting-room, remarked: 'He certainly brought a lot of second-hand furniture along with him. It looks like some old woman's room.'

4

Keith was collecting books at the library for his University courses. Students filed past the house to register for fall classes. Professor and Mrs. Lamberton now belonged, not to each other entirely, but to the intellectual and social life of a little wedge of Saint Anthony fenced off from the rest of the town.

Janet began to return calls. Looking into the glass, she was glad for Keith's sake that she was decent-looking. The chief comfort of spinsterhood, she and Mary had formerly decreed,

is the complete lack of a social position and its accompanying responsibility. But as a wife she must put on the charming clothes she had bought and exchange polite nothings with the wives of fellow members of the University. Her trousseau had pared down her bank account, but it was worth it, even though she had entered the married state more penniless than Keith. Some of his stocks, inherited ones, had proved troublesome to convert into immediate cash.

Janet stood before her mirror reflecting upon the image presented to her. Keith thought that she was beautiful. In his poetic moments he described her eyes as amber or champagne held up in the light, mixed with the reflections of a green garden. But when he turned to malicious truth, he declared that they were green, like a cat's, a tortoise-shell cat's. Janet smiled at herself and hurried downstairs.

She found that her former conception of the University was quickly changing. Before her marriage, when she had met one of the men crossing the campus, she had thought of him as Professor Jones — freshmen use his chemistry textbook; Professor Smith — no good at lectures, but they say that his new book in geology is the best on the subject. Now these scholars had taken on new values. The professor she saw pass by the house was the husband of the woman who had invited her to a bridge party the next afternoon, or of the energetic organizer of the Fresh Milk Campaign, or of the chairman of the Tea Committee of the Faculty Wives' Club. This was what getting married evidently did to one.

The way to study the world, Janet's mother had insisted, is to study your own church parish. Within those limits Mrs. Norton's knowledge of life had been supreme. A University circle, her daughter decided, gave one equal opportunity. There was the same range of gossip, the same study of everyday human behavior. From her callers and the players at the first bridge parties, which started out briskly as soon as classes began, Janet accumulated a knowledge of University affairs and people which the ordinary man could not have gathered in ten years. Faculty wives drew inexhaustible

amusement and conversational matter from the idiosyncrasies of other wives and their husbands. Mrs. McGill, wife of the professor of public speaking, was a favorite target for ridicule. She boasted continually about the cleverness of her husband. Mr. McGill made speeches all over the state and even in Chicago. His 'Addresses for All Occasions,' unlike Professor Masters's thin volumes, had gone into numerous editions. He was sought everywhere for the humor of his after-dinner speeches, especially at the Commercial Club by the important Saint Anthony business men. One could never decide whether Mrs. McGill flourished her husband's greatness for love of him or magnified an ordinary man to match her measure of herself.

Mrs. Kranich, wife of the professor of Anglo-Saxon, was an equally prominent subject for gossip. The day she called Janet decided that she was a harmless person, in spite of an unfortunate sprightliness of manner; but in this it developed she was greatly mistaken. It was said that every year Mrs. Kranich went through the list of instructors promoted to the rank of assistant professor to select a husband for her daughter Gretchen. She had a theory that the time when a young man was most amenable to suggestions of marriage was in the interval between his promotion and the drawing of his first decent salary check. After he once tasted the joy of possessing enough for one person to live on, he began to dream about a summer in Europe, and was hopeless. But at Chippewa, sadly enough for Mrs. Kranich's schemes, instructors arrived with wives or married while they were instructors. Nothing less than an assistant professor for Gretchen. A year ago her mother had attempted to decoy Mr. Lamberton. Finally she gave him up, with the announcement that he was a confirmed bachelor. This year she had her eye on Mr. Hadley.

'Perhaps you ought to warn him,' Janet's callers suggested. 'She always begins by asking them to dinner. She's afraid they'll get lonely.'

'Were you ever invited to Professor Kranich's to dinner?' Janet inquired of her husband.

He looked perplexed. 'Possibly. I can't remember. There's too much eating around in other people's houses here at Chippewa.'

Janet carried two notes which arrived by the afternoon mail into Keith's study. 'Invitations to dinner,' she announced, waving them toward him.

He was dragging a succession of pasteboard cartons out of the closet. 'It's eighteenth-century painters. At least I think it is. Or perhaps it's the rationalists. I meant to label them.'

Keith had been restless to get started on his book, the absorbing study of years, pursued in England and France, at Harvard, at Chippewa, 'The Cultural State of Eighteenth Century England,' as soon as his lectures gave him a little time. Evidently the right moment had come.

'Now I'll have to go through every last one of these boxes before I dig out what I want.' He scowled, kicking the nearest one with his foot. 'If I'd only labelled then!' he lamented again.

'Chippewa is beginning to invite us to dinner.' She flourished the incriminating documents a second time.

'Oh!' He rose from contemplating the heap of boxes, looked at the pieces of white paper in her hand. 'I see. The serpent has already entered our garden, darling. Isn't there anything we can do?'

'And you're starting your book. Our beautiful holiday is over.'

The first invitation was from the head of Keith's department, There was no avoiding that.

The Masters, dwelling in one of the Colonial houses on River Drive, belonged to that small aristocracy in all universities comprised of men with private incomes. Born in a family rich from Pittsburg steel, Mr. Masters had lingered in the paternal industry long enough to double the value of his inheritance before he left the actual management to his

brothers and retired to Elizabethan scholarship in a University. He never referred to his past of blast furnaces and molten metal. But he had been wise enough to know that he couldn't live without money while he fingered Elizabethan folios. Standing in front of the fireplace before dinner, he appeared not unlike the courtiers of his favorite sixteenth century, Edmund Spenser or perhaps Sir Walter Raleigh, without the curls and ruff.

The English butler who stood behind Mr. Masters's chair in the dining-room had probably impressed even that tight little ring of richest families in Saint Anthony who were oblivious of most faculty households. The other guests, besides Pierce Hadley and the Masters' daughter Eleanor, were Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop Eliot, who like the Masters themselves, did not belong exclusively to the University side of the river. Mr. Eliot Janet remembered from her instructorial days as a tall, blond gentleman who left his office late every afternoon in evening clothes to attend the social affairs of the city. His English accent, the result of a year of Oxford built upon four years of Harvard and the birthright of Massachusetts, was much admired at Chippewa. He was a princely guest at dinner, his smooth formality and easy conversation holding together the unfamiliarity of the eight separate lives and interests gathered around the Masters's table like a good oil charming the strange mixtures of a salad. Janet found him refreshing after a solid stretch of dialogue with Mr. Masters. Angela Eliot was the neice of Silas Holliday, the wealthiest man in Saint Anthony, owner of a flour mill, extensive railroad interests, and the only private picture gallery in the State. His wife ahd brought her niece from a stupid little town where her chances for marriage were almost negligible, sponsored her through a first season, and had planned to marry her to a young man with money. But Angela had preferred Winthrop Eliot's polish and culture, which had the fascination of the unfamiliar in Saint Anthony. After her marriage she continued to live with her aunt, and since Mrs. Holliday's death had looked after her uncle, whose wealth she was expected to inherit.

In the procession of dinners, Keith was often little help. He looked down at his plate from some speculative height, made belated replies to a shy hostess who thought he needed bringing out, and left all the chatter and rapid shiftings of conversation to his wife. Reproaching him afterward was of little use.

'Don't I talk when there's anything to say?' he would ask her, a glint of amusement in the enigmatic blue eyes which had first endeared him to her.

'But it's when there isn't anything to say that people have to talk,' she attempted to explain, knowing all the time that her effort was wasted.

But the dinner parties, however boring to Keith, offered a variety of social experience. One night the Lambertons dined in the same house with the Holliday picture gallery: an assortment of Correggios, some of the worst examples of the Raphael school, a feeble imitation of Botticelli, three Guido Renis in a row, a Wouverman, Lawrence, Kneller, Lord Leighton, and the most sentimental representatives of the American nineteenth century, open to the public on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The next night they hunted for the Reynolds's brown cottage in the jumble of streets near the railroad tracks. Mrs. Reynolds hurried downstairs, a child's wails following her, and greeted her guests almost breathlessly. She was a frail woman, with an almost transparent skin and large blue eyes. The triple operations of getting dinner started, putting a baby to bed, and getting into a company dress seemed to have taken all her energy. Janet wondered why she had taken the trouble to invite them.

'My husband used to go walking with Mr. Lamberton last year,' Mrs. Reynolds began shyly, as she pressed Janet's hand. 'It was when the baby was so small we could never get out together. He said Mr. Lamberton was such a help — taking his mind off his work. He worries so.'

'Talking with your husband sure was a pleasure,' Mr. Reynolds added. 'And we've been looking forward to meeting you.'

Mr. Reynolds, a small man with a brown, seamed face and a nervous habit of twitching his mouth as he talked, taught physics. Keith had told Janet about some remarkable spectroscopic work he had done in the investigation of the chemical composition of stars, comets, nebulæ. Some of his charts Keith had studied in his laboratory.

Mrs. Reynolds excused herself and went into the kitchen. Janet wondered what she could say to Mr. Reynolds, who sat nervous and ill at ease in one of the three rocking-chairs huddled together. The room in which they sat was almost filled with a large roll-top desk, hand-made bookshelves, a child's rocking-horse, a dictionary on a stand.

'My wife has been urging me to explain the wonders of the atom, Reynolds,' — Keith turned to him with his warming smile. 'I've told her some awful whoppers, I fear. Can't you help me out there?' At times Keith, the abstracted scholar, was singularly resourceful.

Reynolds ceased making queer bird-like noises in his throat. Immediately he became the schoolmaster. He pulled himself up to his desk, rolled back the top with a bang, got out paper and a pencil. He began drawing what appeared at first a series of suns, with one, two, four, or more worlds shooting off near by. The suns were protons, the planets electrons revolving around them. Immeasurable distances between. All this within the atom. Nothing could be simpler. Hydrogen now — one proton — one electron.

The baby upstairs was crying harder and harder in long shrieks punctuated with momentary gasps for breath. Then again louder and longer. Mr. Reynolds did not appear to hear. Helium — four protons — two electrons.

Mrs. Reynolds came to the door. 'George, dear.'

He followed her into the hall. They talked in low tones. Janet was conscious of the reproduction of the Sistine Madonna in brown on the opposite wall, of Reynolds's 'Age of Innocence,' over Keith's head. Everything in the room was brown or tan. No color. Saint Anthony, unless people were rich like the Masters, seemed afraid of color. Keith was

wobbling the dictionary stand back and forth to test its staying power.

'Good idea, this. I ought to have a dictionary stand, Janet.'

The low voices in the hall went on. Probably Mr. Reynolds was a poor carver, who needed minute instructions before he got into action. Perhaps his wife was telling him what to press upon his guests a second time, what to pass over. Janet had memories of her mother's difficulties with her father as a host.

Mr. Reynolds returned. 'Now, lithium,' he continued, taking up his story at the exact point where he had dropped it.

Janet soon arrived at the conclusion that there were three planes of Chippewa society. Classification was based mainly upon conversation. Professor Masters and others like him kept discussion to painting, music, the theatre, in a community which had no direct contact with any of these arts. Plays in New York or Chicago followed by means of theatre magazines, or in London and Paris during a sabbatical leave when they had drunk deep of such delights, took a good share of the dinner conversation. They considered references to the one subject upon which they had accumulated exact information bad form, and steered adroitly away from it in spite of Keith's persistent questionings. A second group, always the largest in any professorial gathering, never let the conversation waver from Chippewa. They talked about the football games, their classes, made mysterious and important reference to the committee meeting which had held them all the afternoon. A conscientious host attempted to include in the conversation his tired and flushed wife who had been toiling over the dinner for hours, or the purely domestic wives of his colleagues. He immediately became terrible. He brought out anecdotes about students which amuse no one but the teller, recounted them at length when he should have been dispatching his soup or carving the roast. His wife made signals. He stopped short, tried to go on,

made a sorry mess of his tale. More serious entertainers lugged out the business side of a university, low salaries, unsympathetic regents, too many hours of teaching. It was, Janet felt, as tactless as to keep telling a sick man he was dying. But some teachers were like moths around a candle, fascinated by the spectacle of their own ruin and bumping into it again and again. Yet, for all their talk, they never did anything to improve their condition.

Then there was a remnant that talked about their 'subjects.' Within their own bounds of learning they were high potentates. As one listened, one soared above provincial limitations, Chippewa, institutional machinery, stood on a hillock commanding an expansive view, and the winds of a distant fruitful plain blew refreshingly over one.

But here a mere woman had absolutely no chance. The rarefied atmosphere reduced her to dumbness. At the Masters, or the Eliot table women dipped lightly over the arts, often more gracefully than men. Contemporary fiction, verse, drama, the latest experiment in paint, are the natural prerogative of the leisured woman everywhere. She tosses her bright word at the opportune moment. Or while a husband stamped heavily over the dull routine of University business, his wife could chat comfortably to Janet about other faculty wives, the best campus bridge players, the next meeting of the Faculty Women's Club. But male talk of the kind which reconciled Keith to foregoing the ease of his own table remorselessly excluded the female. Where men's talk soared highest, women's drooped lowest, like the seesaws of one's childhood. Indeed, the wives of brilliant men talked almost not at all. Janet made the initial mistake of denying herself the pleasure of listening to the men swooping around in their heights like tireless eagles, to start a mild twitter among the women. But it was no use. They didn't want to talk. Thereafter, Janet, too, became silent, smiling quietly to herself at her new role of listener. According to the prevalent Chippewa standards, she was, perhaps, a good wife, a real faculty lady.

CHAPTER III

SEX WAR

1

'Just another of Masters's dashing young men.' Thus Mary Giddings explained Pierce Hadley that first night when she made a quick escape from the disturbing presence of an unexpected fellow lodger. Masters tried to have all the men in his department dashing. Mr. Eliot, Mr. Witherspoon — both of them dashing. Keith — not dashing, perhaps, but bearing the mark of distinction which Masters demanded.

The women — none of them was dashing. But Masters employed less care in selecting females of his department. They were more or less accidents. Some one had to correct freshman English papers. Women were more conscientious than men. Therefore Professor Masters employed several women who trained four sections of freshmen in the niceties of English usage while they worked up courses and theses for the Doctor's degree. This had been Mary's life for four years. She resented the unfairness in her department. The women did the drudgery. The men got the promotions. She hated the men, their false show of politeness, their greedy readiness to take the light end of the load. And now this newcomer, with his handsome clothes, his manner of speaking, his smile in which she discerned some ridicule of her own roughness, was more distasteful to her than any of the others.

Janet was enthusiastic about Mr. Hadley. He and Keith had been at Harvard together, had travelled in Europe together. And then when Mr. Hadley's literary work in New York, some kind of journalism, criticism — Janet was a little vague about that — hadn't quite satisfied him, Keith had sent for him to come to Chippewa.

'Isn't he charming?' Janet demanded.

Mary scowled. She didn't consider him charming. He made her uncomfortable. Now Janet's husband didn't give her that feeling. He was just as superior, knew as much — more, Mary suspected — but after a few days of living in the same house with him, Mary liked Keith. He was nice, kind, like an old friend. She was getting accustomed to his Eastern accent. Of course she liked the Chippewa way of speaking better. It seemed more natural. Not that it was. A summer vacation journey, on one of those sixty-day round-trip tickets manufactured for school-teachers' tours of the East, had taught her that the natives of certain restricted areas talked like Keith, without putting on airs. Even children of the streets of Boston and Portland omitted their *r*'s and used the broad *a*'s of affected Chippewa young ladies in their teens or players on the stage. Mary accepted Keith's somewhat formal conversation, which sounded at first like a set speech in contrast to her haphazard way of talking. She was beginning to admire his mind, not like hers, of course, but neither shallow nor conventional. His wistful evasiveness had an indefinable attraction, like strange music heard for the first time.

But Mr. Hadley she thoroughly disliked. When she saw him, she wanted to begin arguing with him. On anything. It didn't matter. If he expressed an idea, she immediately adopted a contrary one out of mere perversity. She would have avoided him if she could. But Janet was always inviting her in to tea, and Mr. Hadley invariably came also. He was too polite, bobbed up from his seat, brought her a chair, made her feel like a gawky country girl.

She had believed an education would give her everything, make her wise, cultured. Her brothers Clifford and Jim laughed at her because she was always studying. All they wanted was to get started farming for themselves. She worked for her board while she went to high school, and then in a cafeteria during her college years. A long struggle which had left its marks on her.

Mary couldn't talk like Mr. Hadley, running smoothly from one topic to another, never serious about anything. She envied his grace, his culture. Why should he, without effort, desert, have all those endowments she had worked so hard to possess? At the same time she envied him, she distrusted him. She was convinced he despised women, especially intellectual women. Probably he denied them brains, reasoning power, serious interest. She'd prove to him he didn't know everything about women.

2

During the opening days of the University, Janet tried to settle down into her new life, but it was not easy. Getting married, a wedding-trip in the North Woods, one's own home at last, opening gifts — all that part was exciting. But one must shake down into daily routine. She started the day feeling so aimless, like a schoolgirl given an unexpected holiday she didn't know quite what to do with. When she came downstairs in the morning, she saw her neighbor Mrs. Henderson, wife of the professor of ancient history, hurrying off to the grade-school where she taught. She and Keith spent a long time over breakfast. While she stood in the window watching the stream of students from the street-cars pass by, she experienced a vague restlessness. Then Mary dashed off to a nine-o'clock class without breakfast, waving to her as she leaped from the steps. Pierce's more deliberate departure followed. Keith was settled in his study. Most of his lectures came in the late morning and afternoon. The dishes were waiting to be washed, one must concentrate on marketing — all the necessities, potatoes, vinegar, salt, bread. The house was quiet now, the clock, a wedding present, sedately ticking on the mantel. All the students were settled in their classes. Time for the postman. Letters still came from friends congratulating Keith and her on their marriage. Yesterday a wedding-present from a boarding-school friend now living in Paris. But that sort of thing must be almost over. To-day the postman walked right by.

It was strange, being alone like this, no eyes looking up at you as you talked, taking seriously what you said. You jotted down items on the grocery list. The dishes were washed. You got out the vacuum sweeper. Had she, Keith asked, arranged for Mrs. Peterson to come every day and do up the rooms? Poor Keith, who would never know what a pittance of money an assistant professor and his wife had to live on. But Keith was in his study. He was too absorbed to hear the steady hum of the vacuum.

Looking out of the upstairs window, she saw her neighbor Mrs. Chamberlain pass by, from the second house beyond hers. She was wheeling a child in its carriage, and two little things trotted along beside her like baby quail.

Sometimes Janet got the marketing done before luncheon; again it was afternoon. She tried to go in the middle of class hours to avoid getting mixed up with the crowds of students crossing the campus. It wasn't comfortable — when she missed calculations; it seemed very queer.

When Keith came home to luncheon, he began briskly, 'What have you been doing?'

There was nothing to tell. 'Just charging about,' she tossed off, changing the subject rapidly to his activities.

When Keith lunched at the Faculty Club, she took up a book — the book he was reading — to look at while she ate the scraps left from last night's dinner. Keith's reading-matter was more varied than hers. One must march along briskly to keep up with him. There was so little time to read, and so many books crowded into their otherwise bare home. In a little while, she would know how to manage better. Sometimes she sat a long while, the empty dishes scattered around her, before she realized that time was flying and that she must finish up the loose ends of housekeeping and put on another dress. Her existence, this combination of so many inharmonious, combative way of filling in a day, seemed to leave no stretches of time for concentrated work. She had thought of marriage as a release from the classes which kept her from pursuing independent study in the new fields opened

up to a philosopher. Frequently Mary reminded Janet of her beautiful leisure. She was dipping into a book on matter which Keith had brought her from the library, reading about *geodesics,* one of the terms tumbled into contemporary philosophic discussion by the physicists. It was a word which had echoed persistently in her memory since the day of the Denbroch lecture.

The house smelled queer. Something from the kitchen. Yes, the prunes, burned to a black mass, and her new aluminum pan was ruined.

The day she came home from playing bridge in the fourth brick house in her row, she found Keith seated on the study floor with paper of varying size, color, and general state of wear littering all the territory around him. He looked exhausted. Evidently from the condition the floor was in he had opened all his pyramid of boxes.

'If I only had a table — a very big table,' he sighed.

'Isn't your desk large enough?' She glanced at that bulky article of furniture, also entirely covered with slips of paper.

'I'm so discouraged,' he went on, 'I've collected enough material now. I must stop and get something written. But where shall I begin?'

Probably Keith was hungry. A good dinner would revive hope in his studies.

'I'll have dinner very soon,' she encouraged him.

But she was tired, too, after the hours of unaccustomed concentration upon bridge followed by substantial refreshments, and her preparations limped along. Mrs. Field announced that Mr. Field would have dinner all ready when she got home. He was famous for his cooking. But how did the other players manage, those with husbands without the culinary genius and enthusiasm of Mr. Field and also voracious children? But none of them seemed in a hurry to leave. She had really been ashamed of the way she had looked furtively at her wrist-watch the last half hour. The combination of domestic and social life must be something a wife gradually learned.

If Keith would only stay out of the kitchen until she had dinner ready. He was so eager to help. In a servantless house, he insisted that a husband must do everything he could. The first time she tried to make thick gravy, Keith had read aloud to her Meredith's 'Woods of Westermain' to illustrate his contention that Meredith was no poet. In a misguided moment she had expressed the opinion that he was. During her first attempt to turn an omelet, he had been reading from the volume 'The Principle of Relativity' which she had intended to try once more ever since the Denbroch lecture. The omelet had flown high before it flopped down upon the floor, from which Keith had worked hard to raise it. But as an omelet there wasn't much to be said for it after that.

Perhaps his preoccupation with his notes would save her tonight from having poetry read aloud to her while she dashed abstractedly from one end of the kitchen to another. A new husband, so eager to spare her, and such a nuisance really.

At dinner Keith could think of nothing but the chaotic state of the materials for his great work.

'I'll help you tomorrow, dear,' she said, unconsciously adopting the soothing tone one takes toward a fretful child. 'I'll get them in order. Fortunately I've got a card catalogue mind.'

'And I haven't,' he admitted, making vicious jabs at his salad. 'But you've got too much to do as it is. I can't add to it this drudgery.'

'Putting things in order is just what I like. Better than anything else,' she insisted.

The sight of Keith's notes in the morning gave her momentary pause. They *were* rather hopeless. The oldest scraps of paper, Keith acknowledged, were falling to pieces, and perhaps it would be better to transfer them to cards of uniform size. Janet's typewritten copies drew forth a burst of commendation. With somewhat less enthusiasm he accompanied her to an office-supply house, where business men invested in efficient looking card-indices.

He frowned, looked at them dubiously. 'Almost too me-

chanical,' he murmured to Janet. 'If I got my cards entombed in a place like that—— Why can't I go on using my old English trunk?' He smiled at the mention of the much-worn relic of the leisurely years abroad when he had nibbled at learning pleasantly.

'But you never can find anything you want in that trunk,' Janet reminded him. 'You pull everything out every time, hunt and hunt, and then get *so* discouraged.'

The clerk stood at a cautious distance while husband and wife argued the matter.

'It would be just the same with this steel casket.' Keith tapped the coldly unsympathetic metal with his fingers.

'We'd classify all the cards. Then you'd know just where to find them. In a minute.'

Keith began to look helpless. 'If you think I'd better have it——'

Janet purchased the card catalogue. It made a gigantic hole in her housekeeping money, but she'd manage somehow. The months of labor she must spend copying out Keith's minute notes on her typewriter, she tried to face with a valiant spirit.

Keith had written isolated chapters of his book, 'The Cultural State of Eighteenth-Century England,' which, in spite of the fact that they seemed to bear no relation to any scheme that Janet could conceive as holding together so complex a mass of detail, were both erudite and sparkling. He was attempting a reconstruction of another age, making a frame for the picture of a literature which hosts of writers had painted again and again. To do this he must describe the kind of houses men built, the furniture men of taste chose, the paintings and sculpture they admired and bought, their travels, the music they heard, the plays they saw, the books they read. For Keith, the works of Swift, Pope, Fielding, Johnson, Gibbon, Burke, and Hume needed the background of the society which supported and encouraged them. All this was simple enough. But his predecessors had been content with chatty reminiscences of the courtly century, accompanying and ex-

plaining copious illustrations; well enough for a gift-book, a table ornament, but neither accurate nor complete. From the detailed notes on ill-assorted scraps of paper, Keith intended to build up a swift, vivid, dramatically moving scene.

It was his idea, complicated when he explained it with strata and substrata of modification, exception, and contradiction, that historians had never been able to write satisfactorily about the culture of any age. Either they looked over the universe with a telescope and reported what they had seen, or they sat over one nation, one little community, with a microscope, and neglected the rest of the world. Now this was all wrong. Every period had a real harmony, both extrinsic and intrinsic, which was, of course, hidden from contemporary insight, to be revealed years thereafter in its completeness only to patient critics like himself. Within this unity were subsidiary unities, all like little spheres in a solar sysem, the unities of various nations sharing what we call a common civilization in spite of physical and mental barriers, but at the same time possessed of a national character fixed by race, situation, climate, past history. So England in the eighteenth century was like France, and yet unlike it. This similarity and dissimilarity in nations Keith had long studied. Now he purposed to show how the England of his chosen century, although feeling certain international influences, developed its own separate life. He was not bewildered at the mixture he studied of Italy and France, of Holland, even of Greece and Rome. He smiled at those writers who sought classic purity in art and found it corrupted with Chinese, Etruscan, Gothic monstrosity; who declared that the period had no style of its own, no life of its own. Nor did he follow the example of his predecessors who despaired of its unity and cut it up into the age of Pope, the age of Johnson; the reign of Anne, the reigns of the Georges; into classicism and romanticism; reason and sentiment; deism and Methodism; city and country. To him it was all one.

Janet, now in possession of the card catalogue, set herself once more to the task of organizing Keith's notes. She un-

tied a bundle relating to the architecture of London. In visits to the Kensington and the Soane Museums and saunterings in the Adelphi region, Soho, and Mayfair, Keith had studied the work of the Adam brothers and their contemporaries, recalling to memory by catch phrases, which she faithfully transcribed, the chimney pieces, ceilings, mahogany doors, doorknobs, and delicate iron work which fashioned the beauty of stately houses. There were cards and cards of scribblings about Lansdowne House, where the Earl of Shelburne had exhibited to his statesmen friends his collection of classical sculpture. Card after card about Chesterfield House. Lord Mansfield's home, Ken Wood, Keith described in detail: the finely proportioned Adam library of gorgeous brown and pale rose and heavy gilding, the imitation marble pillars — Keith paused to dilate on the difficulties of transporting marble and the methods of 'marbling' wood — its semi-circular alcoves at each end to hold bookcases; the orangery; the music-room with its weight of gilt; the exquisite ceilings and fireplaces. A catalogue of the paintings fell out of the heap of notes. He listed the important furniture; the fine Chippendale, the Chinese tables and cabinets holding the blue porcelain, the terrible Chinese fireplace, the mixture of good and bad. He wrote a little essay on the use of color, especially the combination of apple-green and yellow in one of the halls. For color as used by the Adams, closely related to that of Wedgwood pottery, he had gone to Saint James's Square, round whose garden young Samuel Johnson and Savage had once walked one night "for want of a lodging." There he had found a house whose blue and terra-cotta plaster work was tenderly preserved by its present business tenants.

Janet opened another box. On top were portly packets of notes on gardens, the working-out of views, vistas, classic temples, sham ruins. Pope and his poor little grotto of shells and looking-glass. She pushed them aside. Where would all this bulk end?

She began to classify the notes as she typed. Architecture, Painting, Music, Drama, and so on. But it was the subhead-

ings that made her feel dizzy and uncertain of the utility of all her schemes to help poor Keith. Architecture — the Classic, Italian, French influences — the native materials used, the imported — Keith went into everything so thoroughly — stone-quarries, the use of plaster, of wood, of red brick — architects, builders, workmen. Were workmen paid decently? 'An amusing coincidence,' scribbled Keith, 'that the Adelphi, under whose roof Shaw and Wells were later to dwell, was erected by cheap Irish labor, after the Scotch workmen had struck for higher wages.' Some of the notes on the living expenses of the working-class in London had got mixed up with contemporary opinions on the relative merits of Gainsborough and Romney — what Sir Joshua Reynolds thought, said, did. Janet began to hate that distinguished member of the Johnson circle. Almost as bad as Horace Walpole, whose opinions about politics, literature, painting, obtruded in the most unexpected corners.

The clock was striking twelve. A whole morning gone and nothing to show for it but a study reduced to such confusion that it would take her an hour to get it in a state of peace suitable for Keith's afternoon work. Was there an extra can of soup in the pantry? Keith was lunching at home to-day. Something for salad? Already the students were tumbling out of the Chemistry Building next door.

3

'I don't think Miss Giddings likes me,' Pierce Hadley confided to Janet and Keith.

Keith's eyes were jubilantly prophetic. 'She'll tell you what she thinks about men some day.'

'Keith!' Janet protested. 'You mustn't give her away like that.'

'My friend and classmate must be protected,' he insisted, swelling out like a bull-frog and strutting up and down in front of her to flaunt his defiance. 'He must be protected against the unexpected onslaught of a valiantly determined foe to men. The shock — percussion I might say — of

discovering that we are not liked——And we from the cradle expecting universal approval — at least from gentle woman——'

'She doesn't approve of men?'

'Shrivels 'em up. With her tongue, that is. Men — destroyers of women's careers,' chanted Keith. 'Foes to female intellect — to emancipation — to individualism — to academic recognition — to ——'

Janet put her hand over his mouth and choked him off. Pierce had collapsed into a nearby chair. When had Keith learned all that about Mary? and he looking so aloof and uninterested when she had decided upon the advisability of confiding in him why Mary disapproved of their marriage. At the time he had not appeared to be taking in a single word.

Keith was an honest prophet. Mary soon unburdened her mind on her favorite subject. One afternoon when the four of them were drinking tea together, the sight of Mrs. Chamberlain, passing by the house with her three little girls, got Mary going. 'Look at that woman!' she attracted Pierce's notice to the tragic vision before his eyes. 'She was a bacteriologist before her marriage. She and her husband worked side by side in a laboratory. Look at her now.'

'Three splendid children,' Pierce responded.

'Her dissertation was almost ready to publish when she married. That was five years ago. Part of her work has been published by some one else. The rest is out of date.'

'Science will get mouldy,' commented Pierce cheerfully, 'whether you marry or not.'

Keith sipped his tea, stealing sly glances toward Mary, who had not touched hers yet.

'Every afternoon,' continued Mary, 'Mr. Chamberlain plays golf, and then works half the night in his laboratory.'

'He's a good player, too,' Pierce interrupted.

'And she goes on day after day sterilizing bottles and straining spinach and carrots and cooking oatmeal.'

'Ghastly, isn't it?' Pierce's tone was excessively sympa-

thetic. 'But I don't think *I've* ever been guilty of idealizing domestic life. Have I, Janet?

Janet rubbed her roughened fingers together. In spite of spasmodic attempts to get them back to a ladylike condition, they grew worse and worse. She looked down at the broken finger-nail, the stained thumb and forefinger. A familiar smell rose from them. Possibly it was imaginary, but they always smelled of onion. Naturally enough, for daily, it seemed, she was grating that powerful vegetable which all the recipes called for. Confronted by the faultlessness of Pierce's well-shaped hands, she hid hers under the tea-table.

'No,' she replied, 'I don't think you have, Pierce.' He was making it more and more difficult to preserve the proper respectful attention to Mary's successive volleys of horror. No one was more successful than Mary in unconsciously giving comic flavor to tragedy. Janet avoided Pierce's malicious gaze.

'And there's Mrs. Dale,' Mary shouted. Mary's voice invariably rose as she warmed up to her argument. 'She was an archæologist. You can read her articles in the journals ten years back. She was making important discoveries then — real contributions. Her husband teaches Latin here. I guess George Dale is decent enough — a good father and all that — but he's an awful bore. One of those doddering, ineffectual creatures. Now if she were the man in that family ——'

'And then there's Mrs. McIntosh,' Pierce droned in a kind of chant. 'No one can accuse her of being intellectually trampled upon.'

'Mrs. Dale is an immaculate housekeeper. So is Mrs. Chamberlain.'

'I wasn't saying anything about Mrs. McIntosh's housekeeping.' He put on an aggrieved air. 'Was I, Janet? Not a word. Of course people talk, but I try not to hear.'

'No intellectual woman gets anything out of marriage,' Mary concluded, drinking her cold tea in a long gulp, and refusing to smile at Mr. Hadley's light-mindedness.

'What I want to know,' interposed Pierce in a dangerously

quiet tone,' is what an intellectual *man* gets out of marriage?'

'Please, Pierce, let me give you some tea,' Janet suggested while her militant friend was preparing a biting reply.

Keith turned to Janet. 'Do you think it's decent for us to listen to all this? And we not five months married?'

Mary looked somewhat embarrassed.

'You upset all Miss Giddings's theories.' Pierce reached for his second cup of tea.

'You have no regard for *our* feelings — you two,' Keith upbraided them. 'If no intellectual wife tied to a husband and no intellectual husband tied to a wife get anything out of marriage, what, I beg, does a brilliant woman like Janet, tied to a husband with a reputation for some intellect, at least, get out of it? It's too much for me'. Keith left them and started off toward his study.

There was some truth in what Mary had been saying. Janet remembered her callers, Mrs. Chamberlain and Mrs. Dale, whose conversation was now strictly domestic. Marriage must have dulled minds once full of zest for germs and inscriptions on Greek vases. Then there was Mrs. Page, who had studied painting in Paris. But Janet had never heard Mrs. Page mention Paris until Keith, noticing the misty landscapes on the living-room wall, had asked who painted them.

'I did. In Paris, way back in 1910, before the war.'

'They're very good,' Keith said.

They were delightful, in the impressionistic manner of that period, but individual, too. Keith wanted to see more of her work. But there was no more. After her marriage, the painting had stopped. Just one canvas upstairs in the bedroom. She brought it down to show them, a portrait of her only child Bertie, at the age of three, when he was recovering from an attack of infantile paralysis. They didn't know then how long they could keep him. His father had wanted his picture, just as he was, a feeble, emaciated child, with the queer charm he now had as a cripple of eight.

'It's lovely,' Janet had told her. 'But why have you given up your work like this?'

Bertie took all his mother's time. She taught him, amused him, tried to make up to him for all that strong children had.

'I seemed to lose my interest in painting after I married,' Mrs. Page explained. 'Other things interested me more.'

Professor Page and Bertie. That was it, marriage.

But marriage didn't explain the narrow mental range of women like Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Atkins.

'Why,' Janet appealed to Pierce, 'do the most brilliant men often have the most impossible wives? That's the aspect of the question which fascinates me.'

Pierce cast a defiant look at Mary.

'Sometimes a great sense of inferiority accompanies exceptional ability,' he ventured. 'Such a man needs some one to flatter, to encourage him.'

'Men are afraid of a woman who might criticise them,' Mary announced.

'Thanks, Miss Giddings,' Pierce bowed. 'At last we are almost in harmony.'

'There are other reasons.' Janet smiled first at one, then the other of the combatants. 'Most university professors marry when they're still studying. They're so poor that only a desperate girl will risk marrying them.'

'Unfortunately, our profession is becoming the refuge of the ambitious proletariat.' Pierce, who was a snob, Janet had to admit sometimes to Mary, found many of his colleagues at Chippewa uncouth bedfellows. 'I suppose such a man, if he marries young, chooses a partner from his own social level and finds himself shut up tight in the world from which he hoped to escape.'

'But he makes an intellectual — if not a social escape,' Janet added. 'And that is the woman's tragedy.'

Pierce shrugged his shoulders. 'And the man's.'

'Men,' Mary boomed out, as if the argument were slipping away into the quicksands of subtlety with which she was not concerned, 'are afraid of women who know as much as they — or even almost as much.'

'But I'm not afraid of you, Miss Giddings.' Pierce set

down his tea-cup. 'And Keith wasn't afraid of Janet.'

'Oh, Keith! You can't compare *him* to other men.'

At this blow Pierce crumpled up on the sofa.

'I don't see why we faculty wives should be distinguished for our minds anyhow,' Janet protested. 'What we need is the strength and patience of the cow, the courage of the lion.'

'Bravo, Janet!'

'What are you saying?' Mary demanded.

'I'm enumerating my deficiencies as a wife, dear friend. But I must run away from you both now, enthralling as you are, and get dinner.' Janet, laughing, started for the kitchen.

Janet began to assemble potatoes, spinach, onions, and all the other tiresomely repetitious items of daily fare. To-day she had labored five hours over Keith's notes. She was now in the midst of English country houses — the gathering places for statesmen, poets, wits, beauties, scholars, philosophers. Some of the most famous of these Keith had visited, the closed doors, in many cases, almost miraculously open to him, the picture gallery unlocked, the family portraits explained. Where photographs were not available, Keith had sketched the classic porticoes seen through the trees upon pages torn out of notebooks, or upon the backs of old envelopes. These drawings Janet pasted on separate cards. Keith's hurried writing deciphered, the clear coldness of the typewritten manuscript revealed rapid, living phrases capturing the charm of Sir Richard Temple's garden which Pope, Thomson, and Horace Walpole had enjoyed, with its classic temples, its fountains, its formal walks; the Duke of Bedford's house which sheltered his famous paintings and sculpture; the huge Palladian structures country gentlemen were building.

On the succession of paper scraps devoted to each great house Keith had enumerated the pictures in the galleries: Raphæl, Veronese, DaVinci, Rubens, VanDyck, Poussin, Claude, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Holbein sometimes, Rembrandt, Velasquez. In one gallery the eighteenth century portrait painters were missing. The seventeenth-

century had been its flowering time. A stray Sargent at the end. On a card Keith had written: 'The relation between pictures and prosperity is clear enough. One studies the history and the flavor of an aristocracy from the walls of its galleries.' On another scrap he had scrawled: 'Gainsborough's Blue Boy was the son of a rich ironmonger. Do not be too scornful, great lords and ladies.'

His collection of newspaper advertisements of the sales of famous estates and the catalogues of the paintings, furniture, and books to be knocked off in auction rooms filled several boxes. Janet lost considerable time reading her husband's amused comments on the libraries of country gentlemen: volumes on sport, the history of the county, bound sets running chiefly to essays which could be read a little at a time and, in handsome bindings, helped to furnish a room.

What impressed Janet now, as she thought of this vast body of notes — there was enough on architecture alone to make volumes — was its independence. Keith suffered neither from the awe which Americans too often manifest toward the English aristocracy and their houses, nor from the sentimentality which keeps the English from a critical examination. He poured rhapsodic scorn over the vast and gloomy Houghton Hall which Robert Walpole had erected with the money of office-holding; in equal measure over the monster which his neighbor, Thomas Coke, famous for agricultural reform, had got Kent to build for him. Keith continually questioned the supremacy of eighteenth-century domestic architecture. The modest Georgian house deserved all the praise it had received, but the great show places, with their gorgeous state apartments enriched with gilding, painted ceilings, niches filled with statues, walls set with fine portraits, achieved a cold stateliness and splendid vistas, without warmth of daily comfort. The family rooms upstairs were plain; the guest-rooms frequently looked upon the leads. They were designed for big entertainments; not for people who sat inside to enjoy the intimate association of friends.

Janet began to scrape carrots. This was a queer life to

which she had come, a past culture mixed with afternoon bridge parties, callers, peeling vegetables. Next door her neighbor Mrs. Henderson, after a day spent teaching third-grade children, was probably at this moment scraping carrots or punching the eyes out of potatoes. Then she would type until bedtime from her husband's manuscript on the economic life of the Roman Empire. Mr. Henderson at home needed more care than a child. He was a small man with a delicate constitution, kept going only by his wife's constant care. She protected him from worry, from all practical concerns. She cut his meat, buttered his bread, did the carving even the night Janet and Keith had dined with them. She was a large, maternal woman who longed for a child. Once she had tried to persuade her husband to adopt a little girl. But he was jealous of any other claims to her attention. He knew he needed all of it.

Could Mary understand the difficulties of adjustment to such varied demands as life made upon Mrs. Henderson, upon her? It was something one couldn't put into words. The sex antagonizims of which Mary prated seemed so primitive, so simple. There was something deeper, more complex about the relations of men and women. Mrs. Chamberlain's exchange of bacteria for babies or her husband's avidity for golf was not entirely a question of the greedy ego of the male. Nor could a brilliant woman's preference for the society of a commonplace man to the exhilaration of digging up the past be held up as a tragic example of woman's defeat by the strong hand of man. Janet felt herself unequal to settling these old struggles of physical instinct and civilization which kept feminists like Mary in a state of perpetual unrest.

The carrots were done. She flung the last one with a splash into the saucepan.

4

Janet was seated at her desk in the bedroom window going over her housekeeping accounts for October. Something must be done. No margin for clothes, holidays, even

for dentist and doctor bills. How could two people use up so much money?

A month ago, when the September bills came in, she had made drastic reforms. She didn't see how she could pare down expenses any further. Mrs. Peterson had come every Friday to give the house a thorough cleaning. Four dollars each week. Sixteen dollars a month. Well, that must go. She would do it herself. She evaded Keith's questions, did the additional labor stealthily. He had a silly prejudice against her doing housework. No woman in his household ever had. His mother and sister living in reduced gentility abroad formed his standard of feminine propriety. The only way was not to tell him everything. Then there were the laundry bills. They were terrific. Keith had a gentlemanly luxuriance about clean linen which couldn't be discouraged. To retrench she tried to do part of the washing herself; stockings in the bathroom every night before she went to bed, the silk underwear she still possessed from the fat years of plenty, the cotton dresses she wore in the house, the small linen pieces. She did all of it very badly. The stains didn't come out of the linen. The dresses never looked quite right. Then she had to manage the laundry, too, so that there was a respectable bundle left for Mrs. Peterson, who 'lived off' faculty washing. Those inevitable stockings every night! No matter how tired she was — one pair for her, one pair for Keith, fourteen a week, sixty a month. In a year —— How did women manage to exist through such stretches of inevitable monotony? Grocery bills — adding them up every week — too much one time — paring down here, there. Eating oranges when they were cheap, reserving custards and omelets for a bountiful egg season in spring. Skimming off the cream from a quart of milk. So far she had taken on herself the stringencies of the family budget, the balancing, the redistributions of expenditure, sober forethought, which she had accepted as her job. Keith had his book. But now she began to suspect she had done wrong. It was difficult to remember that Keith had missed all her strict discipline in finan-

cial matters. His grandfather had piled up enough wealth to indulge his sons in luxurious tastes and a splendid indifference to money which Keith had inherited without the means to support them. With his portion dwindled away to little, he had gone off to Europe, stayed until it was gone, come home to find more. Money was something which came to be spent. It was always there. In spite of the fact that Keith earned only seven hundred dollars more than her last year's salary, he continued his casual bachelor habits.

Books — forty dollars last month. Eighteen this time. Why couldn't Keith get the library to order the books he needed? Subscriptions to two foreign reviews. 'La revue libre,' edited by a young Frenchman both Keith and Pierce admired, paid up for two years. He needed encouragement, Keith told her. The finest criticism in the world. Of course he lost money on it. If men like Pierce and him didn't stand behind the scheme—— What could one say? Janet, chewing her pencil, pondered the whole problem.

If she told Keith about the necessity of her petty contrivances, he would be utterly discouraged. He couldn't bear it. There were some things she couldn't tell him.

Last week she had gone off with Mary Giddings and Sarah Leighton on one of their steak bats, a pre-marital indulgence, celebrating Saturday night with good food downtown and possibly a movie afterward. Mary firmly believed that a husband and wife should have separate pleasures. In the end Janet had weakened, sent Keith off to dine at the Faculty Club, tried to enjoy herself with Mary and Sarah. But in the restaurant the food no longer tasted as it had in the old days. With each morsel she saw the money she had been saving for a new chair in the living-room going — going.

Mary, who had a childish taste in desserts, liked nothing so much as chocolate-fudge sundaes smothered in pecans. They adjourned to the proper drug store, tossed coins to see who should pay. An ordinary procedure in the old days. But now Janet felt the greediness of a desperate gambler watching the

dice. Breathless relief. Sarah paid. How sordid, how mean it all was!

Should they go to the movies? Janet decided she was too tired. They might walk home — a beautiful night — for a change. Mary's eyes were upon her. She wondered how much Mary guessed. There was no use trying to repeat the pleasures of your spinster days. It just couldn't be done. You'd moved on to something else. To you it was something better. Mary and Sarah — they didn't know. And the chair —it would take weeks to get back what had been spent.

If she told Keith all that—— Why should she keep on deceiving him — protecting him, she called it — about the adjustments of their income? He ought to realize how little money there was. She was treating him like a child, just as Mrs. Henderson did her husband. But if he knew the real state of their affairs, he'd worry so much that he couldn't get any work done on his book. Other women at Chippewa, how did they manage?

5

Mary's candid opinion of Pierce was that he was an idle loafer. Just like most of the men in her department. All the drudgery done by the women.

'You know I'm speaking the truth,' she declared to her friend. 'You haven't had time to forget, Janet.'

'They have a different way of working, possibly.'

'*Different.*' Mary filled the word overflowing with scorn. 'I should say they did.'

Pierce had become the professional diner-out, snatched up by both town and university society. Already he was one of Mrs. Eliot's reliable aids at dances, the useful bachelor for her dinner parties, the surprise for débutantes, who were beginning to come out rapidly.

'I don't see how you stand it,' Janet told him.

'But one has to go somewhere.'

He sought Janet out in the kitchen when she was washing dishes and gave amusing accounts of the places he had been.

His satiric temper fed on minute observation of everything about him. He chose with discretion from the invitations heaped upon him, at times pleading other engagements, again accepting and then conveniently forgetting his obligations. But his popularity increased rather than diminished. People seemed to like being insulted — at least by gentlemen so unexpected and delightful as Mr. Hadley.

'I'm collecting ammunition for Miss Giddings' favorite topic — the greatness of woman. So far I haven't met any female prodigies, either on this side of the river or on the other. The wives I meet are either brainless and social or brainy and frumps.'

'Pierce Hadley!'

'I'm speaking man to man, dear lady.'

'But I wonder why we come that way.'

'You'll have to ask Miss Giddings. There's Angela Eliot. Eliot would be a useful man here if his dear Angela would let him. He has a good mind. But the pace that man keeps! She's always dragging him somewhere. He might as well give up. He'll never do anything — professionally, I mean.'

Pierce was not the superficially social gentleman who brandished a mocking exterior at Mary, even though he concealed his seriousness like a crime. Returning from a dance, he dug into his work; the dawn found him bent over his study table; his light was burning when Janet went dównstairs to start breakfast. Generally he drank a cup of coffee at the Students' Quick Lunch before he went to his first class. There was nothing equal to a dance, he insisted, for lubricating the machinery of a deliberate mind. He sent himself off to dances that he might work to some account afterward. Then he slept all afternoon. When he joined Mary to drink a cup of tea with Janet and Keith, he entertained her with an elaborate defence of afternoon naps, beautiful long ones, filling up the dead hours between luncheon and tea, making a man — even a woman — fresh and new again.

'I don't have time to sleep in the daytime,' snapped Mary. 'I sleep at night.'

'Please — Miss Giddings. Please try reversing the process. Night is a bad time to sleep, very bad. Try the afternoon. You'd feel much better. If you'll pardon my saying it, you look a little tired now. Take my advice. Sleep until dinner.'

'I'm drinking this tea so I can work straight up to dinner,' declared Mary.

Pierce appealed to Janet. 'Can't you stop her? She's going straight to ruin, this misguided friend of yours. Overwork — not sleeping at the proper time.'

It was useless to describe to Mary the rows of books on Pierce's desk, their variety, their complex relation to the turns of his subject. Mary's mind beside Pierce's was a child's; simple, honest, restless, tortured sometimes, but never original or intricate. Mary worked, ploughed into work, as if literary studies were a cornfield to be ploughed, harrowed, planted. But her seed was all corn. Pierce planted corn, potatoes, hollyhocks, daffodils, larkspur. Perhaps he preferred perennials. They exacted less constant exertion, but were equally beautiful when they burst into bloom. But it is impossible to convince a farmer that orchids bring in more cash per square inch than onions per acre, or that chrysanthemums and pansies bring greater joy.

Mary, going off to dinner in the Women's Building with Sarah Leighton, collided with Pierce in evening clothes telephoning for a taxi. Janet from the doorway caught her quick flash of scorn. 'You see,' Mary's face eloquently signalled, 'off to dine again with the rich idlers in Saint Anthony! And I have to work hard all evening! The baseness of men!'

6

A whirring sound, mixed with the metallic rattle of wheels, made Janet turn quickly as she was about to enter the house. In the early twilight of a misty afternoon, a tall mass of brown was flying down the street, like a sailboat in a high wind, with dark streamers billowing out from it. In front of the house it made a sudden curve and came crashing toward her.

'Oh, Professor Field!' she called to the tall man on roller skates, his brown beard and scarf spread out in front of him like animated pennants.

'Delighted — found — you — here!' he gasped breathlessly. Amos Field, professor of music, was, upon occasion, as hurried in speech as in locomotion. His errand, briefly stated, was that Mrs. Field invited the Lambertons to have tea with them after the organ recital on Sunday.

As soon as Janet accepted, he commenced to tie himself firmly into his muffler, twined twice around his neck, crossed over his stomach, knotted in the back. In spite of these precautions it would be sailing out around him before he had gone a block. With a low bow, he made a half-circle on his skates, and then sped off into the dusk.

Professor Field and his skates were part of the daily routine of the Chippewa campus, as he darted through crowds of students, like Mercury on his momentous errands. With his skates he could fly like a bird, dart through space like a fish, an antelope, a hunting dog. Roller skates had freed him from the shackles of man. When he had first adopted this swift device for conquering distance and time, no one could tell. 'A long time ago.' 'Ever since I've known him.' 'Ask Mrs. Field.' That was what people returned to Keith's patient investigation.

Every Sunday afternoon Keith and Janet went to the auditorium of the Music Building to hear Professor Field play on the organ from three until four. At five minutes before the hour the students were quiet in their seats; an assistant to the professor of music locked the outer doors, and turned out all the lights except the shaded ones over the organ. If the public wanted to hear music, it arrived before three. Otherwise it stayed outside. The tall, bearded man sat down before the organ, bent over the keys and stops. In the shadows he looked like a magician, an astrologer, familiar with the occult. Under his fingers such giants of the past as Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Handel, spoke once more for the present; they stalked over the earth; raised their voices; men bowed

down before them, forgot that their bodies were chained to the Chippewa campus.

Mrs. Field, in a silk dress of the shade known as ashes of roses, elaborately fashioned, received her guests alone. She wore pearls close around her neck, pear-shaped pearl earrings, a long gold chain. Professor Field, as every one knew, was making sandwiches in the kitchen. Every newcomer she greeted with her characteristic smile, winking her eyes shut for an instant.

'I'm *so* glad you could come.'

Some of the guests were bantering their hostess about her latest conquest at the bridge table. She was notorious for her prize-winning. Only the preceding afternoon she had carried off 'Black Revolt,' the most talked-of book of the season.

'Mrs. King must have known who was going to get the prize,' Mrs. Witherspoon remarked in her richly languorous voice. Both Mrs. Field and Mrs. Witherspoon read all the latest novels.

'Now — now,' chirped Mrs. Field. 'But I admit I stayed up until two last night to finish it. Consequently I'm a wreck to-day. Mr. Field was so disgusted. He never reads a novel from one year's end to another — not even the classics.'

'Of course he has his music.'

'He says he'll read any book that isn't about two people falling in love or out of love with each other. He can't stand "the emotional routine." Those are his words. He's always teasing me about the novels I read. "Have you struck the great scene of passion yet?" he'll ask me.'

There was general laughter.

'But love is life,' one faculty lady said half-apologetically.

'Not for Mr. Field,' pronounced his wife. 'It's just buzzing around getting things done.'

Janet, standing in the midst of the animated talk, wondered once more why Field had chosen such a wife. Was it love? She couldn't think so. Even when Mrs. Field was young, pretty, slender, would she have inspired love? Perhaps she

had amused him. When he looked at her now, his expression was invariably that of amusement, friendly amusement. But he had the same expression for other people, too. One couldn't tell much by it. And what of her — the wife of a man who went about on roller skates? Did she think he was funny, have her quiet smiles all to herself? Somehow one doubted if Mrs. Field kept anything to herself.

They were still chattering of books, the outstanding book — books of the year. Keith was talking to Professor Masters and Professor Atkins. Mrs. Atkins, excessively friendly, was flitting from one group to another. Janet could hear her voice first from one side, then from the other.

The crowded living-room was the appropriate setting for Mrs. Field, with its profusion of fat rose-silk cushions, rose-shaded lamps rising from the floor, the tables, the walls, the elaborate lace pieces decorating the arms of chairs, pillows, tables. Her husband, coming in at last with the tea-things, appeared as incongruous as a long-legged spider caught in a rosebud.

Mrs. Field sat down before the perfectly appointed tea-table, her cadaverous, hairy husband standing over her issuing commands.

'Careful, Juliet. The tea-pot's hot.'

Was Mrs. Field's name really Juliet, or was this some prankish fancy of Mr. Field?

The host ran around the room adjusting tables, imploring his guests to be seated, passing napkins, plates. Janet, munching a lettuce sandwich, thought of the wonderful hands which had shaved off innumerable paper-thin slices of bread for the sandwiches. That morning Professor Field had played the organ at the Unitarian Church, attended by most of the faculty. At three the recital. At eight church again. But in spite of her guilty feeling about sacrilege to genius, she took a second, a third sandwich. She knew he liked his guests hungry.

The pièce de résistance of the tea-party was the chocolate éclairs. Mr. Field had made them.

'Between church and the afternoon recital,' his wife whispered to those about her.

Professor Field, his duties over, came and sat down beside Janet. She told him no woman she knew could make food taste the way he did. He waved a beautiful, strong hand carelessly in front of him. He reminded her of his collection of French, Italian, German, and Danish cook-books. His famous éclairs came from the French cook-book; his coffee rings from the Danish or the German. He explained his results in terms of art: restraint, harmony, balance, tone, flavor. At the other end of the room the guests were reminiscing about his roast ducks, garnished with apples, red and glazed with sugar, rings of lemons, gleams of paprika. Of course it was art applied to the evanescent. Most women wouldn't give the time or the brain.

He went on to explain that he had first taken up cooking as a relaxation from music, which tore his nerves into tatters. But he had found it also gave him escape from conversation. Usually at his wife's parties he didn't talk at all. He made sandwiches, passed tea-cups, plates in utter silence. It was the same with his fancywork, an equally effective sedative for a shattered nervous system. He looked around the room, motioned to Keith.

'I've got something to show you both,' he whispered.

There were times when he liked to gather one or two choice spirits about him, retire to his sanctuary upstairs where he kept his piano, cook-books, and fancy-work, and indulge in an exchange of what he designated real conversation. But one must choose one's topics with discretion. There never must be talk of music. Too sacred for speech. Nor of Chippewa. Too mundane. But Professor Field liked to be asked about his fancy-work. He knitted all his stockings, both silk and wool; the long scarves he used for his skating instead of an overcoat; he crocheted the elaborate lace decorations for his wife's living-room. At least people said he did. His hooked rugs were famous. Some base women had copied his designs, adapted from the Indian weaving he had studied in

the Dakotas, in Wyoming, and among the Pueblos in New Mexico; but theirs remained lifeless reproductions.

From a table in the window he brought out a large piece of canvas on a frame which he was working in cross-stitch with a variety of brilliant colors. In its present state one could make out snow-tipped mountain ranges, pine trees, blue water.

'It's remarkable,' Janet said.

'An experiment. Something for a change,' Professor Field answered carelessly.

When Janet returned to the guests downstairs, she found Mrs. Field enthroned in a large armchair discussing her health.

'I don't know why it is,' she was saying, 'but I just can't stand housework. A little exertion — I topple right over. I was cleaning the guest-room the other day. We're expecting Mr. Field's sister. I was using the vacuum cleaner — not hard — and I fell right down in a faint. I was lying there when Mr. Field came home — just coming out of it a little. He was so indignant. "Why didn't you wait until I could do it?" "I can't let you do such work," I told him. "It isn't good for your hands." I really get ashamed sometimes of his doing so much. That afternoon I was perfectly all right — played bridge as usual—— But housework——'

Keith refused to pity Professor Field. Mrs. Field was a good old sort, who gave her husband something to bestow his competence upon. Now a really capable wife would have smothered his domestic genius, driven him back to his music, killed the fragile musician.

'With Mrs. Field's help we'll have him playing Bach at eighty,' Keith assured Janet.

Perhaps he was right — that the musician who played with such tender richness and grace was not the husband of Mrs. Field — of any woman.

CHAPTER IV

OVER THE GARAGE

1

SOMETIMES Janet opened her steamer-trunk, converted into a window-seat for the bedroom by means of a cretonne cover, and looked over her materials on the third Earl of Shaftesbury, all of them in the perfect order of Keith's notes, now that she was done with them. As she shuffled the cards, read over the chapters she had written, she decided that four or five months of good, solid work would see her book completed.

'Why don't you get started, then?' Mary frequently argued. 'If I only had all your free time——'

Janet politely refrained from contradicting Mary's stubborn theory of her leisure. 'Oh, I shall soon,' she promised.

After Christmas, she vowed, she would devote herself once more to the delightfully neat mind of Shaftesbury. After such a decision, she closed the trunk again and made up for dawdling over her papers by increased housekeeping fury.

These glimpses into her recent scholarly past invariably reminded her of the new man appointed in her place. For if one's own philosophy is temporarily buried in a cretonne-draped trunk, one must at least have the satisfaction of watching some one who is keeping his going.

'A little runt of a man, very dissipated-looking,' Mary said of Dr. Spencer. 'I think he drinks,' she added.

Mrs. Page, calling on Janet, reported her husband's favorable opinion of the new instructor. 'He's brilliant, Mr. Page says. "That rare bird, an original philosopher." I remember his words.' Mrs. Page left such abstract judgments to her husband, whom she quoted with painstaking exactitude.

At Mrs. Humphrey's party, Janet learned more about Mrs. Spencer than about her husband. Mrs. Field dismissed him with 'He needs a good brushing.'

'His wife has that new kind of bob — with curls pinned on,' said one of the players. 'At least it looks that way. And the color—— She wears skirts even shorter than the college girls.'

'*She* looks very young,' added the hostess.

'Such a sweet woman,' people said of Mrs. Humphrey, admiring her social manner and her habit of making amiable comments about everyone. Her husband, who taught psychology, was full of fun, though not much — the wives said, tapping their foreheads somewhere in the vicinity of the place where the brain is supposed to reside. But she was a remarkable woman. She did all of her own housework and sewing, had two half-grown children to look after, and yet was off somewhere every afternoon.

'At the faculty reception Mrs. Spencer was talking to everybody — all the men, anyhow — to Professor Page and my husband — as if she'd been here for years,' another player informed Janet.

'She isn't at all shy,' Mrs. Humphrey admitted, the other critics repeating the word *shy* after her in a chorus.

At their belated dinner that night Janet asked Keith if he had met Dr. Spencer.

'Of course. Eager man. Talks a lot.'

'They were discussing his wife at the bridge party this afternoon.'

'From Johns Hopkins — Spencer is. A great discovery — Page says we can't keep him here long.'

'His wife wears skirts above her knees,' Janet announced solemnly. The fun of experimenting with Keith's mental reactions was too great to be resisted.

'Knees — Spencer?'

'His wife.'

Keith looked dazed.

Concerning Janet's successor, Mrs. McIntosh was by far

the most satisfactory informant. Coming out of her husband's laboratory late one afternoon, she waved to Janet, who was hurrying home from another late bridge party.

'Well,' she called out, as they approached each other, 'we haven't seen you around here lately.' Mrs. McIntosh gave the familiar battered felt hat a jerk forward and tried to fasten back the wisps of grey hair which were, as usual, straggling over her sallow, heavily lined face. The grip of her hand left Janet's limp. 'I haven't had a glimpse of you this fall. They keeping you busy — the women — with their bridge and improvement clubs?' Her fine dark eyes showed a malicious amusement.

In a university which had made a hard-and-fast rule that both husband and wife could not be retained on its teaching staff, Mrs. McIntosh evaded the authorities by laboring in the cause of science without pay. While her husband was occupied with lectures and students in the laboratory, she carried on the research he had started. Janet doubted if the pair could distinguish the work of one from that of the other. As she watched them, she decided that no husband and wife she had ever known had achieved such complete unity. Theirs was a marriage, surely, of true minds. Mrs. McIntosh's chief worry was that students would eat up the time she and her Thomas had consecrated to their own investigations. His was that his Dolly got so little recognition for all her toil. They were a queer couple to look upon: he handsome, immaculate in dress; she ugly, except for her beautiful eyes, indifferent to her appearance, and prematurely old. His diplomacy and graceful manners were equally contrasted with her tactless abruptness.

'You'd better come up to the laboratory some day,' Mrs. McIntosh continued. 'I'll never see you any other way. That young man who took your place — Spencer — he comes often. He bothers me almost to death — afraid he's going to miss something.' She grinned.

'Is he clever?' Janet experienced a premonitory twinge

of jealousy. Doubtless he was accomplishing with ease what she had once attempted.

'Clever enough. One of those men that'll stop at nothing, even at wasting my time. Not that it would occur to him that a woman's time was worth anything. Of course he's all for physics and higher mathematics. They all are now. They think they'll get hold of the unfathomable that way. But he's a good biologist — that is, for a philosopher.'

Shouts from the next corner tore the silence which lay over the campus late in the day, and clattering feet came nearer and nearer. Two boys with shrieks like Indian war-whoops fell upon Mrs. McIntosh.

'You didn't wait for us!' they screamed together. They pulled at her skirt, pumped her by the hand.

'There — off with you,' she remonstrated, laughing. 'Great lads hanging on to your mother.'

At last Janet confronted the two McIntosh boys, hitherto legendary figures of terror whom, other mothers said, Mrs. McIntosh neglected for the pleasure of cutting up rabbits and guinea pigs. The slatternly maid who was left in charge of the house, full of smells and dirt, couldn't hold them down. Nobody could. Not even their own parents. At first glance one could understand the force of the general censure. Their hands were dirty, their stockings wrinkled and torn. No caps covered their long, touseled hair.

'We're so glad to see you, dearie.' This from the smaller boy his mother called Wee Tom. To prove his devotion he began beating her with his grimy hands.

James, eleven years old and already assuming a little manly dignity, took his mother's hand and walked along. Wee Tom kept leaping up, catching at his mother, making a general nuisance of himself.

'Tom's been fighting again, Dolly,' James announced. 'I told him Old Tom would beat him up soundly.'

The faculty ladies had also informed Janet of the disrespectful way the McIntosh children had of addressing their parents by their first names. Tall, dignified Professor Mc-

Intosh was Thomas sometimes, oftener Old Tom. One didn't expect such things of the Scotch, who seemed so stern.

'Tom, look at me.'

Wee Tom raised beautiful brown eyes, as soulful and transparent as those of a sensitive bird dog. He was a handsome child, in spite of dirt and ragged clothes.

'You don't show any signs of battle, my son.'

'I licked him — licked him good. Knocked out his tooth. It was loose, anyway.'

'It was that Humphrey boy. He's a coward. He runs when he sees Tom coming.'

'Can't you pick out a boy that'll hit back, Tom?' inquired his mother. 'A scared little boy like Clayton Humphrey. That's a fine kind of fight.'

'He's older'n I am.'

'It's a cowardly kind of fight. A big, strong Scotch boy like you.'

Wee Tom clutched his lips tight together. He beat his scuffed shoes against the pavement.

'Run along home, boys. I'm coming in a minute.'

Tom was glad to escape. As he ran, he looked back at his mother.

'I'm the worst parent on this campus,' Dolly McIntosh pronounced sadly, 'the very worst. My children are frightful. They don't respect their father — nor me, as you see. But they seem to like us. That Humphrey boy's a little ass. As bad as his mother. But I suppose I ought to smack Thomas a little.' Her plain face lifted, looked younger, as her eyes followed her boys. 'He's hard to manage — a gifted child. It'd be simpler if he weren't.' She laughed. 'But I mustn't get started on that. A mother and her children. Come to the laboratory soon. We're in the midst of an inheritance test. How it will come out——' She flung out her hand in an uncertain gesture. 'You can talk philosophy to young Spencer. He'll be hanging around. You'd better keep your hand in——' Observing the children gaining on her in the distance, she stopped suddenly and trudged off

2

At the Faculty Dancing Club, which met over the University Bookstore, Janet was introduced at last to Mrs. Spencer, in a vivid purple gown which did not conceal her long, thin legs, unusually pretty and graceful. It was easy enough to see why this new faculty wife, with her blonde curls, conspicuous red lips, chalky face, and roving black eyes, appeared like some exotic plant introduced into a tidy geranium bed. Janet, turning to Mrs. Spencer's escort, discovered her former colleague Mr. Hardy, an utter fool, Mary insisted, but eminently successful socially.

'Where is Mr. Spencer?' Janet asked, hoping to get a glimpse of the young man whose praises were vaguely disquieting to her.

'Home working. But he got Mr. Hardy — poor lamb — to bring me.' Her eloquent eyes swept over her partner.

'A pleasure,' murmured Janet's erstwhile partner in philosophic speculation, who last year had accompanied her to the Faculty Club dances.

'Billy used to like dancing,' Mrs. Spencer went on, smoothing down her abbreviated skirts and adjusting a filmy support over one shoulder. 'But he's getting awfully serious.'

'It's a way with husbands,' volunteered Mr. Hardy, as he surveyed the condition of the floor. In a moment the two danced off together.

Facetious members of the faculty declared that the dancing club was the most flourishing institution in the University. Professor Abbott, the venerable head of the mathematics department, living at a rapid pace to suit a wife twenty years his junior, was the power who kept it going. When a candidate for an instructorship presented himself to Professor Abbott, he always asked the young man if he danced. In the end he selected the applicant who best combined mathematics and eligibility as a dancing partner to Mrs. Abbott, who was up in all the latest steps. Dean Moore, whose ambition fifteen years ago had been to reform the Law School of which he was now the head, had decided, after a weary battle with ad-

ministrative detail and routinized subordinates, that nothing about the University interested him so much as the dancing club. He was aware that football heroes continued to sleep through law classes, but he no longer worried about it. Let them sleep if they could. Let everybody sleep who wanted to sleep. Even Mr. and Mrs. Eliot, bored with most University social affairs, always came out to the monthly dances. Mr. Eliot, handsome in his correct evening clothes, promptly presented himself to Janet as a partner. Pierce Hadley bowed before Mrs. Eliot. Keith, concentrating on the spectacle of Professor Abbott leaping and skipping through the Charleston in the fashion of the nineties, had not yet claimed a partner.

As Janet succumbed to the monotony of the rattle of music, soothing taut nerves like an anæsthetic, she was conscious of a cloud of purple prancing past her. She thought of a spirited colt as she smiled at Mrs. Spencer.

'Isn't Mrs. Spencer a remarkable dancer?' Mr. Eliot commented. 'Have you been watching her?'

Later in the evening when she was sitting beside Keith, Janet followed Mrs. Spencer and Mr. Eliot through the mazes of an unfamiliar figure of the tango.

'The scissors,' some one near by explained as they stepped in and out, up and down, claiming a good share of the dancing space.

'It's charming,' Keith agreed. 'As stately as the minuet.'

Mrs. Spencer was very lovely. One forgot her unrestrained laughter, her flaunting skirts. Her bright curls waved up and down, the purple draperies floated, the small feet in silver slippers pranced, curvetted, tripped in the flowing measures. She was youth, delicacy, beauty. That one could throw aside all sordid thought, all dire restraint, and dance like this gave an appealing power, an abiding strength.

Mrs. Kranich, her daughter beside her, approached Janet and Keith. Gretchen had piercing blue eyes like her father's, but they gave the impression of always looking for something,

not Anglo-Saxon roots. Mrs. Kranich was watching Pierce, now dancing with Mrs. Spencer.

'No faculty wife ever danced like that before,' chuckled Mrs. Kranich.

Soon Gretchen was claimed by a young instructor who had come without a partner.

'The worst thing about Chippewa,' observed Mrs. Kranich after the necessary preliminary of generalities, 'is that you never meet anybody outside it. We're shut up here tight. I tell Mr. Kranich I like to talk to the clerks in the ten-cent store for a change. They're so simple and natural. Just like me. Not that I haven't tried to be different.' She turned a wry smile toward Janet. 'I suppose Gretchen will marry some faculty man. She never meets any other kind. Now I'd prefer a good lively business man for a son-in-law, but there's not much chance of that. Then I wouldn't have to see my child go through what I had to at the start.'

Mrs. Kranich followed Pierce at the end of the dance. He was almost as rich as a successful broker or real estate man. But he didn't seek Gretchen as a partner. Perhaps he'd been warned.

Keith was making delicate references to departure. He was afraid that Janet was getting too tired. He was convinced that his watch had stopped. Keith could dance if he wanted to. He could even forget that he wasn't enjoying himself if you got him going. But it was simpler to let him make an early escape, Pierce advised Janet. He would take care of her. So Keith slipped quietly away, looking altogether too happy to be polite, they told him.

Mrs. Atkins came to sit beside Janet toward the end of the evening. She was tired of dancing, she declared, fanning herself vigorously.

'I feel so apologetic for not having called on you, Mrs. Lamberton. But the fall is a busy time for me. We've got the freshmen all pledged now.' Her tone was that of a serious sorority senior. 'I feel especially victorious about one of the pledges. If it hadn't been for me, I don't know that the

girls would have got her. Barbara Emerson. Do you know her? She's a striking blonde. The daughter of Samuel Emerson — in the State Senate, you know. She'd been at Wellesley two years and wasn't sure she wanted to join a sorority. But I held out. She'd got into a dreadful boarding-house. That turned out well for Gamma Lambda. I kept telling her how much more comfortable she'd be in a house like ours with girls of her kind.'

'The sorority must keep you very busy.'

'Yes, it does. Sometimes I tell Mr. Atkins I'm going to give it up. It keeps me from so many other things. But until Helen Elizabeth——'

The faculty wives among themselves were skeptical about Mrs. Atkins's sacrifices upon the altar of sorority affairs in behalf of Helen Elizabeth. Next year Helen would be in the University. Then you'd see. Mrs. Atkins would go on just the same, bossing those girls who were eager to be rid of her. But her love of power——

Only the week before Janet had met Professor Atkins on the street-car which clattered across the river toward the business section of Saint Anthony. Something had started him on reminiscences about his early interest in history. In his boyhood, as he ploughed, he had picked up Indian arrows, spearheads, hatchets. He had them now. There were mounds on the bank of the muddy stream which wandered through the farm. An Indian skeleton had been dug up when one of the old trees was blown down in a storm. From his father's and his grandfather's lips he had listened to the story of the Sioux massacre, heard tales of the trading posts along the Mississippi, of the growth of the struggling young settlements. Yes, the farm had started him going. Coming to the University, an awkward country boy, he had wanted to study history. When the lively Saint Anthony girl to whom sorority affairs meant more than her studies married Mr. Atkins, he was still the ungainly farmer. Every one was surprised at her stooping to such a husband. Possibly, years ago, observers had expected her to give him social polish. They might even

have expected him to do something to her mind. But in the end both had remained what they had always been. Externally at least. His mind had gone on burrowing deeper and deeper. She took on new social duties. They had learned to go separate ways.

Again Mrs. Spencer and a new partner passed Janet.

'All the men want to dance with her,' commented Mrs. Atkins. 'Have you heard? She was a dancer — a chorus girl. Some one told me. Dr. Spencer met her when he was still in college. Christmas vacation. You read about such things. Romantic, isn't it?'

Janet's eyes followed the eloquently poetic legs in silver stockings. 'It must be a satisfaction to do some one thing well,' she sighed.

Mrs. Atkins did not reply. She was signalling to a young man in her husband's department. 'Aren't you dancing, Dr. Jones?'

He bowed. 'Will you give me the pleasure?'

Mrs. Atkins, now rested, with apologies left Janet sitting alone.

3

Janet, crossing the campus after the inevitable daily marketing, met Mrs. Spencer again. From a distance the hat perched on the back of her blonde curls, the impudently waving skirt made her a conspicuous figure. But as she drew nearer, Janet noticed the narrow shoulders, the limp, shrunken little body. Impulsively she stopped and put out her hand.

'I wanted to ask if my husband and I might call this evening — if it would be convenient,' Janet ventured hurriedly. 'We've heard such delightful things about Dr. Spencer. You see, I used to teach philosophy before I was married. I'm still interested in what goes on.'

Mrs. Spencer's smile revealed front teeth just far enough apart to give her a childish helplessness. 'Why, sure,' she responded heartily. 'We'd love to have you. Billy says your

husband's great. No airs, but a perfect gentleman. We live in an awful place. Over a garage.'

Janet laughed. 'I don't know which is worse — the smell of gasoline or the fumes we get from the Chemistry Building. We're next door to that.'

Keith, fortunately, proved willing to be taken to call on the Spencers. 'Poor young Spencer,' he said mournfully.

'Why such pity, dear?'

'So brilliantly ill-adapted to the world of usual men,' he explained. 'You'll understand when you meet him.' Keith, like most visionaries, viewed himself as the practical man of affairs.

Keith and Janet reached the door which led to the apartment above the Chippewa Garage. One feeble electric light at the entrance and one high above them at the top of the stairs left an intervening, uncertain blackness over which they climbed as in a dream. A door was opened at the top. A stream of light poured over them.

'How goes it, brave mariners?' shouted a deep, boyish voice.

Dr. Spencer shook hands eagerly with Janet. 'A sister philosopher,' he laughed. 'I've wanted to meet you.'

Mrs. Spencer in a bright scarlet dress was at the door. 'Isn't this hall a nightmare? You're the first callers we've had. The rest got scared, I guess.'

They were ushered into a large, square room. From the doorway one had the impression of looking at a dimly lighted stage done in the futuristic manner. The furniture was painted black, in striking contrast to the red cushions, red lamp-shades, red curtains. But when Janet sat down in a black wicker chair and felt it creak under her, she was aware of the shabbiness and bareness of the bizarre room which tried to make so brave a show.

Dr. Spencer led Keith over to a couch, equally black and red. Instead of conversing with his sister philosopher, he was taking possession of her husband, tumbling him at once into a heated discussion which gave the impression of having

been interrupted only a moment before. It was the field of philosophy whose outer borders Janet had timidly skirted before marriage. 'Oh,' she thought, paraphrasing in her mind the similar terror of a greater thinker, 'if I had only pressed resolutely across all those terrible wastes to the land of clear thought beyond!' That was where young Spencer was, and Professor Denbroch, and Keith whenever he chose. Her husband's elastic mind stretching over everything — she measured once more the freshness and depth of it as she heard his rapid sentences reaching out toward Spencer.

'It isn't that the men of this age are discovering great things,' young Spencer was saying, 'but we're able at last to make exact formulations of knowledge. You've seen the new instrument they've set up over in the Physics Building. It's a wonder. You must see it. I've been following all their measurements. Yes, this is the age of the great instrument-makers.'

Janet was suddenly conscious of the strange young creature in the crimson dress seated opposite her. She must say something to Mrs. Spencer.

'What talkers men are!' Janet began, trying to wind herself up like a top. 'I get fascinated sometimes by their mere volubility.'

'I guess we talk a lot, too, but generally it's about nothing.' Mrs. Spencer was gazing steadily at Janet from the depths of her dark eyes. They were beautiful eyes, heavily shadowed, and strangely at variance with her curls, somewhat tumbled to-night, and the carmine curve of her lips. She turned impulsively to Janet. 'How'd you stand a place as slow as this? I'm crazy about the theatre. And there isn't a decent one in town. I come from New York, you know.' Her voice had a slight sniff of condescension. 'There you can go to a different show every night if you want to. I never dreamed there was places like this — with nothing to go to at night except movies.'

'Is your husband fond of the theatre, too?'

'Oh, he likes it well enough. But he don't miss it the

way I do.' Her eyes turned toward a table in the window piled with books and papers. 'He's all for study. I wish I had something I cared about like that. I can't get him to meals sometimes.'

Around the table ascended tottering piles of books, rising from the floor, column after column, like some dizzy heathen temple.

'What a lot of books your husband has!'

'He's buying them all the time. He can't wait for the Library, he says. Every week counts in work like his. He's writing a book.'

'I know what that means.'

'It's all Greek to me — that deep stuff. Sometimes he tries to explain it to me — just for fun.' Mrs. Spencer's crimson lips parted. Her laugh had a queer sharp edge that jarred one's inner consciousness like an automobile horn sounding unexpectedly on a quiet stretch of country road. 'I tell him I feel as if I was going nutty. You know how it is — like hearing people talk Pole — or Russian maybe.'

'The men say he has an original philosophic mind. He'll be a very important man some day.'

'But that kind of importance don't pay — don't bring in the cash. That's what he tells me. "Don't hope for anything better," he'll warn me solemnly. "The men with new ideas — it's not them — they're martyrs." That's the way he goes on. Do you think it's all true — that only the little men — that's what Billy calls them — the little men who come afterward — say all over again so people get it plain and simple — that they're the ones that get all the fame and the money? That's what Billy tells me.'

'The money, maybe. Not the reputation. I'm sure of that.'

'I'm glad to hear you say it. Billy's always so full of the glooms. Not about his work, but about money. He don't mind, but he's afraid I do.'

'It's hard not to mind.'

'He had a chance to teach night extension classes. That'd helped. But he couldn't afford to give the time, he said.'

Again Mrs. Spencer's laugh beat against Janet's ears.

In one corner there were more books tossed carelessly on the floor beside a chair. Pictures were pinned on the walls: a nude study, a gaily colored group of children not unlike Kate Greenaway's, a landscape orange and red.

'Your living-room is very striking,' Janet remarked, her stock of conversation falling lower and lower.

'I painted every old stick of it myself. Billy's desk — it was just an old kitchen table we picked up at a Jew's on Washington Avenue. Billy was funny about buying furniture. He'd go to one of those junk places. "Got any dollar chairs?" he'd start in. The little Jew would wag his head very hard. "No — no — no." Then Billy would start to go on. The Jew was right after him. Yes, there was an old chair. He was going to throw it out. Honest. One leg gone. Maybe we could nail it on.' Mrs. Spencer giggled at the memory. 'But a few nails and paint — they do wonders. I told Billy our stuff hung together with paint.'

'The color scheme looks like New York,' Janet said.

Mrs. Spencer's face had a sudden change of expression. 'Maybe you're the one to tell me,' she began impulsively. 'You must know how to manage better. I thought there'd be some old lady around here — the kind that likes to mother a bride. You read about them, you know.'

'Yes, I'd like that, too. But they all play bridge now. I haven't found any.'

'I want to know how two people can live on what they pay Billy here. I can't make it stretch. I don't know much about cooking. All we've got is a gas-plate in that hole in the wall back of that curtain.' She pointed toward the end of the room fitted up with another black table flanked by two chairs. 'We eat at Chinese restaurants for a change. They serve lots to eat cheap. And Billy says "hot dogs" are a good enough meal for him. He'd eat 'em every day if I could go 'em. But just the smell sometimes——'

'I suppose because we do the cooking——'

'I've got a party dress at the dry-cleaners'. It's been there

three weeks. But I'm waiting for the first of the month before I can go after it.'

Janet's face suddenly felt very hot before this casual confession of poverty. In this one big bare room, with the hooting and pounding of the garage coming up to them, two people slept, ate poor food, lived, worked out ideas, evolved new systems of thought — and if they loved each other enough, perhaps they could stand all the barrenness of existence, so stark and unrelieved, without moments of bitter hate.

'I wish I could help you — tell you what to do. But I, too — I'm just learning. And not very quickly.'

Janet glanced in her husband's direction. The men were still talking steadily. 'But if we introduce the metaphysical hypothesis that——'

'You start from the vertex of the abstractive hierarchy,' Dr. Spencer was pronouncing with finality.

'They're deep at it.' Mrs. Spencer put her hands up to her airy curls. 'I'm going crazy again.'

Janet rose. 'We're staying altogether too long. I haven't yet learned to make polite calls.'

'I wish you'd come again. It's fun to talk over your troubles with some one that's as green as you are. But you know more.'

Dr. Spencer drew himself out of the kinks of a final harangue. 'It was very kind of you to search us out here.' His eyes encompassed his domain a little apologetically before the visitors. 'I hope to have something better for Mrs. Spencer soon. There isn't much choice here, you know.'

The young husband and wife stood in the doorway and watched their visitors descend into the stretch of unfamiliar blackness. They groped their way cautiously, called back reassuringly to the Spencers outlined dimly in the light above, and then plunged into the blinding glare of the street. A car turned sharply, made its way into the garage, spitting the cloud of its fumes into Janet's face. They walked on in silence through the frosty streets, crossed the campus, the bare

oak trees spreading out their shadows over the walks, and were soon home once more.

Janet hurried past Keith and into the living-room. She threw herself down on the sofa. He bent over her. 'What is it? Tell me. Are you ill?'

Keith mustn't know. It was the Spencers. They had dramatized too powerfully her own situation, given it the violent lights, the melodrama, torn off the disguises, held it out to her in all its quivering, miserable nakedness.

Keith sat beside her, his arms holding her. 'My dearest, what is it?' he repeated helplessly.

She must tell him something — anything. 'My head,' she sobbed. 'It ached so. All the time — I was trying——' She was still crying between the gasps of words. 'When I tried — to talk to Mrs. Spencer. I hope — she didn't notice anything. I tried — so hard.'

'I'm sure she didn't. *I* didn't notice.'

At this Janet laughed— laughed again and again. If she could always keep the scales on Keith's eyes — that poor blind husband of hers, who was fortunately saved from beholding too much. Happy Keith! Fortunate Dr. Spencer! Perhaps all men the same way were saved for the work they had to do by not seeing far ahead of their own preoccupied noses.

She put up a teasing hand, held Keith's nose imprisoned. 'It really is a perfectly good nose,' she laughed again.

Moods of women. When will men ever understand them? Nerves, they say — trying to explain the mixture of laughter and tears — nerves and temperament—— Her poor Keith!

4

When Keith came home the next week with the announcement that the Spencers wanted them to come to dinner on Sunday, Janet felt she couldn't go.

'Why, Keith,' she protested, 'it's I who should ask them. I meant to soon. And they can't afford to have us.'

'That's exactly why we must go. If they thought——'

'I know.'

'I think they're very lonely here. Both of them so young — and new. Yes, darling, we must go. Spencer said he was going to cook the dinner all by himself.'

When Mrs. Spencer, in the same scarlet dress, let them into the room, the red of the cushions and curtains was dulled by clouds of grey smoke. Keith coughed. Janet choked behind her handkerchief.

'Isn't it fierce?' Mrs. Spencer whispered to Janet. 'But I don't dare say a word.'

The host in shirt-sleeves, a big apron tied under his arms, turned from his station at the end of the room. 'Hello, there! You see I'm deep in it.'

Keith advanced toward the cook. 'I see. Chicken *á la française*. It's a *rôtisserie* dinner we've come to, Janet. Watch the man.'

Janet looked. Mr. Spencer was twirling a chicken on a spit over two high gas-flames. The juice hissed against the flame; some of it fell into a pan placed to catch it; more hit the tin platform under the gas-plate, and added its spiral of smoke to the others.

'It'll be all right if you don't set the place on fire,' shrieked Mrs. Spencer, who was young enough to be amused, rather than alarmed, at her husband's experiments.

She threw up the front windows to let the smoke escape, but it gathered stubbornly around her husband, who was too busy to be troubled.

'He's just like a kid,' she apologized as she took Janet's coat and hat. 'We used to have dinners in a little *rôtisserie* on Sixth Avenue, not far from Washington Square. I've always said nothing tasted like that chicken. So Billy said to-night was the time to have some of the old thing.'

There was a yell from the stove. 'Evie, Evie!' the husband called. 'Come here, quick.' Keith seized a dishtowel and was attempting some rescue work. Mrs. Spencer threw her head back and laughed so hard she was unable to help. The spit had burned through, and the chicken tumbled into the flames. Fortunately Keith had got it into a pan. There was a fresh

spit, and soon the chicken was once more spinning round and round.

'It's almost done!' the cook shouted. 'The most beautiful brown. Just look, Evie. — I don't see how that spit burned up.'

'It wasn't green enough, maybe,' his wife suggested.

'Why, I picked out the toughest sticks I could find. Cut them off fresh yesterday from a tree near the river. And I soaked them overnight.'

'Sounds very scientific,' Keith agreed solemnly. 'I don't understand how it failed you.'

Spencer, his face crimson from the heat, gave the fowl a concluding series of lightning revolutions. Then he shouted, 'In your places! It's done. Perfect. Evelyn, you sit down. This is my show, remember.'

His wife sat down. 'If he makes a perfect mess of things, you'll have to stand it,' she warned them. 'He thinks there's nothing he can't do.'

The rest of the dinner, prepared earlier, and sitting around in covered pans waiting for the roasting of the fowl, was quickly dished up. The chicken was brought on with a tremendous flourish.

'Take your apron off, Billy. You look a sight. I don't know whether we want to sit down with the cook or not.'

Spencer carved recklessly, pausing only to admire the perfection of his culinary triumph. 'Just watch the juice ooze out behind the knife,' he commanded.

The chicken was delicious, they all told the cook. No French chef could have done better. The rest of the dinner didn't matter. While they ate, the coffee perked cheerfully from behind the curtain, the smoke subsided. Soon the last tender morsel was stripped from the bones.

'It tasted just like the chicken in our *rôtisserie*.' Mrs. Spencer gave her husband an approving smile. 'Even better, Billy; honest. But for a minute I thought your birdie was gone. I'd have laughed if it'd burned to a crisp. You were so funny, bawling out for me that way.'

'I can't say that you helped much. If it hadn't been for Mr. Lamberton, we'd have gone without our dinner.'

In so simple a household, the dishes were packed up in the sink, the curtains drawn in front of them, and the table pushed up against the wall. Spencer lifted a gramophone from the floor and gave it the place of honor once occupied by the departed fowl. He turned the crank vigorously.

'How about a little music?' he inquired of his guests, as he set a lively dance tune going. 'This is Evelyn's jazz bag. She has it going all day long.'

'Now, there, Billy. You turn it off the minute you start working. I never get a chance to play it.'

'It wouldn't do to jazz up philosophy. What d'you say, Lamberton?'

Mrs. Spencer's slippers beat against the floor. 'Let's have a dance,' she shouted, as if the idea had just come to her. 'This big floor — shove the furniture back — I say, boys.'

'Please teach us the tango you were doing the other night,' Janet urged her. 'If you could teach my husband to do the scissors figure——'

'Easy — dead easy.'

'I can teach him,' interrupted Mr. Spencer. He pulled Keith out of his chair. 'Now, look here, man. Dancing's nothing but geometric fixation. Look at this floor. Now think of it covered with squares — squares. Get that? Now those squares — you're going to bisect them, put curves on them——'

'Listen to him,' Mrs. Spencer turned to Janet. 'Didn't I tell you he thought he could do anything? Who's the dancer in this family, Billy? You bragged enough about that chicken. Give poor little Evie her chance.'

'Well, then, glow. Turn on your feeble light, poor worm. Bring out your little show. I won't take all the glory.'

Mrs. Spencer demonstrated the simple tango steps first with Janet, then with Keith, her husband interrupting every few minutes to tell them about squares.

'Right toe on upper right-hand corner. There. Geometry.'

'Billy, stop it. Nobody but you dances that way. Nobody ever will. You mix them all up. Mr. Lamberton almost had it then. Mrs. Lamberton's perfect. Now the scissors. Easy, isn't it? Now you dance with Mrs. Lamberton. And cut out the geometry, Billy, please. This isn't a schoolroom.'

'It really isn't hard,' Janet reassured her partner.

At the end of the room she paused to see how Keith was progressing. To her astonishment, he and Mrs. Spencer were tripping through the mazes of the figure without a pause.

'Why, he's wonderful! Your wife is bewitching him — making him do what he's never even tried before.'

'He's a real dancer. Better'n I am. By a long shot. Bravo, old boy. You're going it, I say.'

Keith pretended not to hear, went on dancing, looking very grave. Only when the machine had to be wound up, and a fresh supply of music put on, could he think of stopping. Then he danced to show Janet how proficient he was.

'I never knew any one to learn faster,' Mrs. Spencer exclaimed when they came to a pause. 'He's better than Mr. Eliot at the dancing club the other night. Honest.'

On and on they danced, shifting partners, putting on new records, winding up the ancient gramophone, going on once more. Time flew by. Midnight. How could it be?

Play was everything. Thinking — work — what most people considered the most important things —nothing. 'If we only lived over a garage,' sighed Keith, as they started homeward, 'and had a big room like that. It's huge. And one of those music-boxes I've so unreasonably despised. Somehow it all goes together.'

'In the morning you'll be a different man, dear boy. You'll want to talk philosophy with Dr. Spencer, not dancing.'

'Never,' Keith proclaimed, his feet jigging out unexpectedly, as if the rattling music still beat around him. He fox-trotted up the steps, along the walk to his own door, made a concluding flourish with his heels before he opened it.

'Oh, to be always dancing,' he prayed, as he faced the familiar sedate hallway. Then his face changed with a quick

flash of thought. 'I wonder what Dr. Johnson thought about the minuet. It never occurred to me before. An important matter, that. — Janet, why are you laughing?'

CHAPTER V

CHIPPEWA CIVILIZATION

1

The men in the English department generally ate luncheon together at the Faculty Club to escape the rasping Chippewa accent, primitive table manners, and smutty stories. They were no Puritans, but they must have their indecency salted with wit. Since Professor Masters insisted that all of his subordinates be gentlemen first, and scholars and teachers afterward, his department had a homogeneity which others lacked. For the most part importations from Harvard, they stood out conspicuously against the pioneer simplicity of a Middle West university and were regarded by most of those outside as snobs, not Americans at heart, who spent all their time talking of Europe and discussing finicky questions no one else cared about. Spencer, whom Keith was always running off with for lunch, wouldn't have been tolerated in the English department.

The majority of the faculty were men educated at Chippewa or some similar State university, who had crowded graduate study into the confusion of their first years of teaching, the period when they also had babies. Many of them were specialists of note, though frequently illiterate outside their own subject. The scientists were worst, Masters informed his young men. No philosophic understanding. No training in logic. The historians, in his opinion, lacked literary judgment. The textbooks the economists wrote and published through the Chippewa Press had to be converted into respectable English by a little hunchback woman with a vile temper.

Professor Masters confided to Keith and Pierce, the new-

est men in his department, his doubts whether Chippewa would ever become a university. 'A sublimated high school giving itself a big name,' he said of it. But most American universities were little better. He sometimes questioned why he wasted his time, better spent in scholarship, in trying to uplift Chippewa.

'I hadn't the courage to ostracize myself from some kind of a place in society,' he confessed. 'A scholar in the United States — not connected with a university — what or where is he? My daughter at school filling out blanks and confronted with the question: Father's profession? Or when I fill out blanks—— It's anomalous enough to write "teacher." I knew a chap who went in for pure scholarship. The universities distrusted him. If he were good enough, they said, he'd be with them. He had no cultivated circle to take him up. So there he was writing books for nobody to read.'

'He ought to have moved over to England,' Pierce suggested.

'An American meddling in old English territory — they wouldn't have had him. A Yankee intruder — nothing more. He knew better. He lives in France and devotes himself in his old age to good food and wine. It's all that matters to him now.'

'The only course,' announced Keith in his most solemn fashion, 'is to make your own audience — educate the best of the younger generation so that they can follow you.'

'Exactly, my boy. That's what I'm coming to.'

Pierce laughed. 'It sounds very noble. But it's also very slow. I fear I'm not a patient man.'

The universities ate up all one's time with administrative detail which should be performed by clerks, and generally a man had to pay for the publication of any scholarly book he wrote, Masters went on sadly. What was the use? Something, strangely enough, kept him going. His new job of working out the doubling-up of parts in Shakespeare's plays— the fool and Cordelia played by the same actor — it was an absorbing undertaking. There were hundreds of

such combinations which a dramatist had to plan for. Happy in explaining his idea, he forgot the iniquities of Chippewa University in America.

Except for Keith, Pierce Hadley would never have crossed the Appalachian Mountains and viewed for himself the Mississippi plain, that stretch of fertile country unknown to many natives of the Atlantic seaboard. Keith's letter urging him to come to Chippewa had arrived at the lowest moment of his fortunes.

After a year in Europe, during which he and Keith had travelled together, he had come home to settle in New York and become a literary critic. He had letters of introduction, mostly to the older literary men, who, he quickly found, had lost their grip on criticism. The papers which got attention were in the possession of young men who shouted louder than their elders. The latter could be of little use to Pierce; they urged him to try something besides criticism. He refused to listen. The United States needed criticism.

He wrote and wrote, bombarded the reviews with his essays, got them back speedily, started once more. Yes, what he sent them was good, but not exactly what they wanted. Then their regular staff supplied most of the demand. Pierce read the slipshod contents of the weeklies and monthlies devoted to a survey of literary production, despised what he found, and tried to comfort himself with the reflection that he was too good for them. He kept on for a year. He had a small income, but it wasn't enough to satisfy his standards of existence.

Keith's letter roused a desire to resume their pleasant bachelor life together, and he accepted the offer from Chippewa.

The announcement of Keith's marriage changed everything. Old Keith with a wife! The idea was too ridiculous. He had taken it for granted that his friend would never marry. What kind of a woman would marry him? Keith wrote that she taught philosophy at Chippewa. Pierce envisaged a monster blue-stocking in spectacles.

His first glimpse of Janet somewhat relieved him. Keith

had done rather well for himself. She was distinctly a beautiful woman, with no outer blemish of intellect. But why had she married Keith? Most women like her demanded something else besides pure mind. Possibly philosophy had done it, by giving her romantic notions about the joys of intellectual communion. Poor girl! She'd have her rough times, shed a good many tears with such a husband. No woman could appreciate a man like Keith Lamberton, especially so pretty a creature as this one, smiling at him and directing the conversation almost immediately to Rose Macaulay's 'Potterism,' that bitterly young book which, he hazarded a guess, Mrs. Lamberton had thrown out to him, a sorely defeated journalist, as a white flag of sympathy and understanding. But if she insisted upon pitying him right away, he retorted by giving her back full measure of pity.

They must be frightfully poor — this Lamberton pair, for he knew most of Keith's money was gone. His friend let money melt away. And Chippewa salaries, at least what was offered him, were little more than enough for knicknacks. Pierce had a Yankee sense of money. He hoped this charming wife had something of her own. Most likely she didn't; for the house was like an empty barn.

From the first day, Professor Masters was charmed with Pierce Hadley.

'You were wise,' his chief told him, 'to come to us here and give up all that literary trash. The critic in America — it'll be another fifty years before we'll be ready for the critic.'

'But one has to begin sometime. I thought I'd give them a start.'

Professor Masters only looked pontifical. 'You're better off here — just what we've been looking for. In the universities we can do a little. A few students maybe — raise the cultural level——'

Pierce, after having viewed, from a train window, for two days the flat stretches of country which separated him from home, felt no instant joy at his unique opportunity to raise the cultural level of Chippewa. But since his critical spirit

had accompanied him on his journey westward, he immediately transferred it to this new scene. He listened with a quizzical smile to Keith's raptures about Chippewa. Idealists were always hopeless romanticists. They had to be to keep going. He was surprised, however, that the ambitious men who turned their field-glasses on every minute speck of the American landscape in their hunt for material worthy of boisterous mockery had not yet discovered Chippewa and the civilization it represented. The gentleman with staves who knocked down American prejudices and the novelist content with the lower realms of mediocrity had as yet left Chippewa to undisturbed self-satisfaction. The professors they sometimes gave a flip of derision were not real professors, but pure caricature. Pierce, seated with the members of his department at luncheon in the Faculty Club, looked around him and marvelled anew that no one as yet had satirized that part of the United States which, after all, was the measure of the culture of a young country.

2

The sprawling Witherspoon house, a weather-beaten structure that gaped at the passer-by from the corner of Jefferson and Market Streets, appeared, even from the outside, to have been designed for crowds. When Janet entered it with Keith and Pierce on Saturday evening, she was conscious, after the fresh air outside, of the heat, the stuffiness from successive generations of cigarette smoke, the pollution of many people. It needed gusts of clean wind blowing through it to purify it for everyday living. The two large rooms thrown together, with a supplementary hall for the overflow, could accommodate a good deal of literary enthusiasm. There were sofas everywhere. One wondered how a family could endure so many.

They walked through a room full of talk, cigarette smoke, and lighted candles toward their hostess, whose low voice floated warmly over the heads of her guests standing in groups of five or six. She was surrounded by young men,

with a background of faded tapestry on the wall behind her, a picturesque figure in her black gown lighted up with touches of gold, her dark narrow face intensified by long Sicilian earrings in filigree and bands of black hair drawn back severely over her ears. As she talked to the young men, she emphasized her words with graceful flourishes of a cigarette in a black holder.

'So good of you to come,' she murmured. 'I've been looking for you.' Janet presented Mr. Hadley. 'I want you to meet all our friends here. The literary colony of Saint Anthony.'

She presented them in rapid succession. There was the column writer for the 'Gazette,' a quaint little man, who looked like a modern copy of Charles Lamb; there was Mr. Simpson, in charge of its book-reviewing, who portioned out most of the novels to Mrs. Witherspoon. The gentleman in spats and horn-rimmed eyeglasses wrote a play that had got on Broadway the preceding winter, she explained before they came up to him. 'His naughty play has made him famous here,' she added with an arch smile.

They talked a moment with Mr. Weathers. He seemed a harmless young man.

'Now I've done every one but Marie Hanson,' Mrs. Witherspoon announced. 'She's here somewhere, but I don't see her.'

Their hostess, aware of other guests pressing for her attention, left them, and Pierce and Janet escaped to a quiet corner. During the introductions Keith had got separated from them.

'Is Mrs. Hanson literary, too?' Pierce asked.

'She's the Chippewa mystery. The wife of Gustave Hanson, professor of sociology, and the mother of five children.'

'Oh,' responded Pierce.

'But it seems that the Hansons have an automobile and a servant they pay a hundred dollars a month — all by no other visible means than an associate professor's salary. So the myth has been circulated that she writes detective stories or sentimental serials for women's papers — both tales pass

current here — under a pseudonym unknown even to her husband. It's a terrific problem. She doesn't seem literary, but then again she may be. So — here she is somewhere. I've never met her myself.'

Mr. Witherspoon was arranging a chair and table in the bow-window. 'Let's sit on the sofa,' Pierce suggested. 'We might as well be comfortable. I wonder what's happening to-night.'

'One can never tell. That's part of the fascination. Two weeks ago he had an English poet.'

When they had captured the sofa, Pierce stood up to signal to Keith, who had been wandering in and out of the crowd, moving with sufficient alacrity to escape speaking to any one. They had observed him from time to time, his face wearing a baffling smile. An internal adventure all to himself, Pierce had ventured to guess. But although he was not far away, he was blind to their motions, and they had to give him up.

On a near-by table lay a heap of magazines with orange, red, and yellow covers, the kind devoted to art at the expense of stability which generally die before the contributors are paid. Mrs. Witherspoon's name was exposed on the top volume.

Mr. Witherspoon now stood in front of his table, looking somewhat tired. His emaciated, ashen face, small, gleaming eyes, compressed mouth, and disdainful nose were not the marks of a happy man.

The guests became stationary. Even Keith's peripatetic activity was stopped suddenly. Mrs. Witherspoon stood in a doorway, trailed by Mrs. Field, who admired her hostess even more than did the adoring young men. She was like a fat old hen, Pierce murmured, pursuing a smart, trim crow.

Before Mr. Witherspoon began to read from his manuscript, he reminded his guests of what all of them already knew, the impossibility of the creative life in an industrial society like that of the United States. Painters, writers, musicians had from time to time temporized by pitching their tents over night in New York, but they had soon realized

that they must go farther. At the present moment Paris was the only modern city where an artist could live. And to-night he was going to present to them the artistic results in fiction which emanated from the American colony on the banks of the Seine.

Polite handclapping followed this announcement. When it subsided, he began to read in distinct, powerful tones calculated to reach the most distant recesses of the hall.

This literary group had its origin, he explained, in a remnant of American soldiers and journalists staying on in Paris after the war. They had discovered quite by accident that in helping to make the world safe for democracy they had come to a place where their inner lives, their creative spirits were for the first time to develop.

Here Mr. Weathers had a lively spurt of applause. Janet admitted to herself that it would be easy to succumb to the spell of her host's pulpit manner.

These young men, he continued, had lingered there, at first bewildered by what surged for expression within them. They sat in cafés listening to the painters, poets, critics who expanded their theories. But they had nothing to say for themselves. At last they heard of the brilliant man who was to bewilder his generation. In a tumult of talk which divided around him, they, too, found their voices. First they talked. Then they shut themselves up in their garret rooms overlooking ancient streets, the Seine, mediaeval churches, the towers of a vanished aristocracy, and began to write. One among them, Adam Beverly, the sensation of the moment, whose sinewy prose, at the same time liquid as running water, was the able instrument for a daring type of narrative which could never have burst from the clods of American soil. But the next generation would link the names of Hawthorne, Poe, Whitman, Melville, James and Adam Beverly as the small band of American writers who made the literature of their country not entirely a barren waste.

Mr. Witherspoon opened Adam Beverly's last volume and read bits here and there. It was daring — very daring,

Pierce murmured in Janet's ear. Mrs. Field's head in the doorway was vibrating like a barometic weathercock. A stern-looking woman with short, gray hair seated near Janet was making sounds from the depths of her throat, like a purring cat.

Afterwards, the most eagerly literary portion of Mr. Weatherspoon's hearers crowded around him.

'You see what a stout link binds Saint Anthony to Paris and the rest of the world,' Pierce remarked to Janet. 'There is no longer what might be called the provincial spirit.'

It was, indeed, amazing that Saint Anthony, even more the portion of it close to the Chippewa campus, should seethe with such ferment about the new school of literature.

Where could one get hold of Adam Beverly's books? Who had been to Paris, seen him, touched him by the hand? Mr. Hadley's name was mentioned. He had lived in Paris. He knew the literary life there. A cry went up for Mr. Hadley.

Pierce was dragged from his sofa. 'But I'm afraid I don't know Adam Beverly——' He tried to put them off. 'Now my friend Lamberton. He's your man. He's lived in Paris longer than I.'

'Mr. Lamberton — where is he?' some one called out.

Keith was once more wandering aimlessly up and down, smiling to himself.

'How could you!' Janet reproved Pierce.

Mr. Weathers, the dramatist, had captured Keith, and was leading him toward the group around Mr. Witherspoon.

'Adam Beverly——,' Janet heard him say. 'What about Adam Beverly? I knew him? Yes, every one did. But I can't tolerate the man, really. Style? Not so bad. Seriously speaking, however, Adam's got nothing to say — nothing.'

Keith had not heard a word his colleague had spoken. The soothing voice, launching him upon a pleasant midsummer sea of thought, had given birth to a new idea, which he had been pleasantly chewing as he wove in and out of the crowds in the two big rooms.

Mr. Weathers, who had stated loudly only a few minutes

before his supreme devotion to all of Adam Beverly, drew back, bewildered, black. Janet flew to her husband and Mr. Weathers.

'Mr. Lamberton has read so little of Mr. Beverly's work,' she hastened to explain. 'Outside his specialty — he's quite lost really. Any books which disturb his theories annoy, irritate him.' Her words tumbled breathlessly upon Mr. Weathers, whose look turned from black to deep grey.

Mrs. Witherspoon hurriedly introduced both Janet and Keith to a plain, ruddy-faced woman. 'My friend Marie Hanson.'

'I've heard of you from Dolly McIntosh,' Mrs. Hanson said.

A pale little girl in a jade-green velvet dress passed Mrs. Hanson a cup of coffee.

'Well, Sylvia—— This is Mrs. Witherspoon's little girl,' she told Janet. 'I wish you were home with my five chicks, dear. Their father's popping corn for them.'

'But I have to help mother pass cups,' the child explained, hurrying away.

Mrs. Hanson gave Janet a meaning look. 'Puny child. With grown-ups too much. She ought to be out romping with my youngsters more.'

Around them circled talk of books, the autumn harvest of them, the opinions of the reviews. Writers—those Olympian creatures whom Mr. and Mrs. Witherspoon snatched up for their Saturday evenings — the authors who appeared in the Women's Club series — the critics from New York who spoke in the Unitarian Church. Mrs. Field was recounting in detail what she had read only that morning from the Literary Supplement of last Sunday's 'Gazette.'

'Do you know Mrs. McIntosh's Wee Tom?' Mrs. Hanson asked, turning her back abruptly upon literature. 'A wonderful child. He and my boy Ralph hunt frogs for the biology department, and Tom collects cats, too. He's the terror of the neighborhood. They say he steals pet pussies. And dogs,

too. He took Mrs. Field's old poodle up to Professor Sterling. But he thought Flossie looked familiar.'

'The older boy — is he like Tom?'

'A nice child. But quieter and more ordinary. Two like Wee Tom would be more than parents could stand — even Mr. and Mrs. McIntosh. The ideas that boy has — remarkable! Yet no one has a good word for him but me. I thought I'd tell you, so if you get a chance to be nice to him——'

'Thanks — thanks very much. I'm devoted to his mother.'

'The finest woman around this University. But not everybody knows it.' She looked at her watch. 'I must run off. Sorry. The children should have been in bed hours ago. Their father'll be worn out with them.'

Mrs. Witherspoon, seeing Janet alone, placed a light hand on her shoulder. 'Was Marie Hanson talking about her children? I've never known her to talk about anything else. I suppose you've heard about her. She won't admit she writes — insists she can't spell straight. But that rumor persists. I wonder sometimes if she doesn't use her children as a smoke-screen. She must be ashamed of what she does, or why conceal it?'

Keith was beginning to show the restlessness of an active dog on a leash. Janet gave weary-looking little Sylvia her cup and made a quick departure.

All the way home Pierce was seized with successive bursts of enjoyment over Keith's plain words on the subject of Adam Beverly. Keith looked at him in surprise.

'I didn't mean to damn harmless old Adam Beverly,' he apologized. 'He's a decent chap in his way. But taking him seriously — making a cult of him. That man who grabbed me——'

'Weathers——'

'Expecting me to—— It was such a knock-out revelation—— That Saint Anthony, into which pour thousands of bushels of wheat from the Mississippi and the Red River valleys — this stalwart young city—— In this place two rooms and a hall crowded with people yearning for the decadent

imitativeness of an idle and ignorant crowd of exiled Americans who talk about art far more than they produce it—— It's the death of this place — this nation—— It's our business to keep at the job of developing a country that's still in the teething stage — not sit jammed into a crowded room bawling for art.'

'But, my dear Lamberton,' objected Pierce, 'can't you see that this lively literary spirit is what you must nourish and develop if you, as the great modern scholar and critic, are to find an audience for your theories upon the banks of the Mississippi?'

Keith in response quickened his pace. The sidewalk resounded with his vigorous tread.

'But what surprises me is that Mr. Witherspoon goes in for all this enthusiasm,' Janet said.

'There's the pity of it. The man has taste. He says some good things. We've already talked over our theories. As a young man he dreamed dreams of writing significant books. Fiction in the Henry James tradition, but with more stir. I suppose every English department has its Witherspoons — the frustrated creators.'

'Literature will never be made in places like Paris and London and New York,' proclaimed Keith, between his great strides. 'Artificial hothouses — every one of them. If we in America ever have any good writers, they'll come from such places as Saint Anthony — from——'

'Yes, I've heard you say that before, old boy,' interrupted Pierce. 'I respect your hopes for the Chippewa region. But where is your literature in these parts? Are you referring to the mysterious Marie Hanson or the spatted gentleman who wrote the smutty play? Or even our hostess, whose sketches, I hear, slide so dexterously close to the *risqué* without touching it?'

Keith met these questions with an impressive silence.

'What has delighted me about this show to-night,' Pierce disclosed to Janet, 'has been finding out for the first time with what seriousness these people take writers one never

even hears of in New York. Poor hacks crowding in here and there, but never mentioned among the chosen people. Not considered even. They get connected with some lecture bureau — I don't know how — give a lecture — are taken up by Mrs. Witherspoon and her like — introduced to their set—— From then on, their memories are venerated in Saint Anthony. Their glib commonplaces about books, literary movements, gossip, quoted forevermore.'

Keith was whistling softly to himself.

'Of course for Witherspoon it's tragic,' Pierce went on. 'The way he venerates these triflers who get books published. He manages to go to New York once in two or three years at Christmas time. That's a snatch of real life. Eliot tells me he comes back looking like a prophet fresh from a revelation. He's talked to writers — got back the old conviction he'll succeed Henry James. Then the awful vacuity of Saint Anthony for another long stretch. It gets him. You noticed how he looked to-day? He's driven to cultivating the stray Grub-Street tramps that make capital out of places like Saint Anthony. Every year or two he thinks he's made a literary discovery — dug some rare gem out of obscurity. He writes him up for something or other — reads his eulogy first to that crowd we saw to-day. They all got excited. And so the great back-wash spreads westward and flourishes.'

3

Professor Masters considered Pierce Hadley his most successful importation. His partiality he took no pains to conceal. The young man was a witty and ready conversationalist one could invite to meet distinguished visitors. Whatever happened, Mrs. Masters said, she could count on Mr. Hadley's talking right on. Both husband and wife approved of his appearance, his clothes. They approved also of his private income, a comfortable addition to his natural qualifications. It protected them from hard-luck stories, from unexpected demands upon the wells of pity, which, as they grew older, were tapped with more and more discomfort.

Fortunately he was a good teacher. Enthusiastic students spread abroad their verdict that no one else could present his subject with the clearness and dramatic vividness of Professor Hadley. One just couldn't help learning. They clamored to have him speak before the Students' English Club. They requested him to take the chair at momentous undergraduate gatherings. Such reports reached the dignified head of the English department, confirmed him in his high estimate of his favorite young man.

Professor Masters suggested to various members of his department that they visit Mr. Hadley's classes for inspiration. He invited Miss Giddings to look in upon them. With great self control, she refrained from expressing her sentiments at the moment. She hurried to Janet to unloose the bonds from her wrath.

'Pierce Hadley's mind is like a Christmas tree — all hung with baubles,' Mary concluded contemptuously. 'Holding him up to me—— That — I—— He with no depth!'

'But can't depth and grace go together?' Janet questioned.

'It's his superficiality that gives him a following. Fools quoting him — hanging on his words. And he playing to the gallery!'

But Janet looked doubtful. Professor Masters had also suggested that Keith visit Pierce's class, and Keith had been delighted. The friend he had brought to Chippewa was making a substantial place for himself almost at once, was popular, admired. Keith took unto himself a goodly portion of the credit. Yes, he told Janet, he must drop into the dear boy's lecture as soon as he had a little free time. But, of course, he got more and more involved in his own affairs, and it was Janet who visited the large lecture-room full of students hearing about contemporary literature. She succumbed to Pierce's art, which gave a personal glow, a delicate polish to all he said. She admired his tact, the hidden barbs in his comments, his wit, his charm. He was devoting himself that day to an analysis of the weakness of the approved fiction of the moment. America would have no literature, he con-

tended, until ideas were combined with form. If he could make any generalizations, he would say that the male novelists had ideas, but lacked form; the women had form, but few ideas. This was easy enough to explain. In a country still intent upon developing its material resources, only the women had had time to take on polish. As writers and as readers they were often more civilized than the men. It was the women who wanted culture, not the men, a statement he could prove, he added with a playful flourish over the students in the class, by the fact that most of them were women. But this feminine control of culture, of literature had certain inevitable results. The most unfortunate was content with well-written books which offered a romantic escape from actuality. Another was a demand for purity, or for the hiding of coarse facts of existence in misty phrases. For himself he preferred the crude fiction which wallowed deep in the mire of contemporary politics, social and industrial unrest. Not that this friction had claims to art. For the most part it remained unwieldy journalism. But it had life. Some day it might have art. Pierce enforced his point with readings from a number of novels, the under-graduate literary idols of the moment, and appealed to his hearers for corroboration.

Janet, knowing Pierce's power, shook her head. 'I'm afraid you're unfair, Mary. I've visited his class.'

'Soft food — the kind that doesn't need chewing — that's what he gives them. And then that voice and manner. They think he's come down from the skies to them. I distrust popularity. Now Keith——'

Janet waited breathless. Keith wasn't popular. No need for Mary to try to tell her he was.

'Keith is solid,' Mary went on. 'He doesn't care what they think —what they want.'

This from Mary, who, not many months past, had called him a limping, faltering, pathetic creature. How words stick in the memory! But now she was Keith's most hearty champion. He was one of the few men in her department she respected. The others—— Was it pity which had changed

her? Did she see her friend's husband stuck fast in some quagmire and refrain from upbraiding him for his sins? All of Janet's other worries dropped away before this great and terrifying problem of Keith's success in his work, his fortunes at Chippewa. For no one had told her that Keith was doing well, lecturing brilliantly, uniting Professor Masters and the undergraduates in a chorus of praise.

She must visit Keith's classes, see for herself. She ought to have gone weeks ago.

'It'll be an awful bore,' Keith warned her, 'but come along if you wish. Come to my eighteenth-century course tomorrow. I'm getting them ready for "The Rape of the Lock." All that stuff about London you've been typing for me.'

4

Keith tumbled into his classroom, his hair somewhat ruffled, to make the lecture platform with several long strides a moment after the bell had rung. Always a little too late. Not much. Bells stirring him from his delicious preoccupations. Janet was in a rear seat.

The undergraduates, two rows of them — the last three rows of chairs were empty — brought out notebooks, and shook their fountain pens. Most of them were women. Keith fumbled in his brief-case for his lecture notes, got them out, spread them upon his stand.

He was lecturing on the London of Pope's day, a fascinating subject. Before he began to read, he was conscious of an ungainly Swede in front of him with hair the color of ripe wheat. Mr. Hanson — Mr. Johnson — whatever his name was — why should he trouble his young head with eighteenth-century England? Why should any of these students seated before their teacher? The fashionable circle of eighteenth-century London meant nothing to the sons and daughters of the Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish farmers who had cut down trees and dug up stumps to plant the wheat which now fed Saint Anthony's flour mills. Nor to the children of

skilled Scandinavian artisans in Saint Anthony and other Chippewa towns who had an old-world reverence for learning. Nor to the scattering of Irish whose grandfathers had fled from the great famine. Nor to the great-grandchildren of the Yankee farmers who had come West to get cheap land and had become the Chippewa pioneers. They were beautiful, simple products of the soil. So, at least, Keith liked to fancy them. What lay outside their little sphere troubled them, spoiled their delightful natural quality. He was like a restorer touching up a primitive.

The same old problem. Pierce advised that, if they insisted upon electing such a course, in spite of Keith's admonitions to go into others, he could teach them how to read 'The Rape of the Lock,' go over it with them line by line, have them tell him what it meant.

'Save all your good stuff for your book, my boy,' Pierce said. 'Don't bother students with it.'

'But this is a university. At least it ought to be.'

'Dear dreamer on Elysian streams,' Pierce bantered him. 'These are the banks of the Mississippi.'

But Keith himself as a college boy — not like any of them, perhaps, but one could never tell — had profited most from those teachers whose words were beyond him. Grappling with what was at first too hard, he had come to understand. This, he declared, was education.

He began to read his lecture, presented the London of Pope's day, described the society to which 'The Rape of the Lock' was playfully addressed; a world of gilded chariots, ombre, hoop-skirts, wigs, sword-knots, clouded canes, and French romances. On and on he read in his pleasing, well-modulated voice. The Swede was writing hard, the hand built for a plough somewhat slow with a fountain pen chasing after Keith's speedy, involved sentences.

Janet listened to every word. Keith drew a rapid sketch of the life of a gentleman in those days: his education, the grand tour, his settlement at home, with his time divided between his town residence and his country estate, his interest

in his pictures, his sculpture, his collection of rare books, his patronage of painters and poets. Such a gentleman read the classics and subscribed to Pope's 'Iliad.' He also drank hard and gambled. The ladies — of whom Belinda was a typical example——

What did the boy with the big hands think? What had country schools on the prairie, the Lutheran church, a small-town high school, summers spent shocking wheat, done to prepare him for the amenities of the social scene in a remote country and a still more remote century?

The lecturer paused. The fountain pens came to a quick stop. Bent heads were raised. Keith pushed aside his notes, looked down upon the two rows of stolid, almost phlegmatic faces. One of his beautiful smiles, those smiles Janet had come to dread, changed the grave man into a tantalizing boy. He had a little joke he was about to share with them. Janet could interpret all those lightning changes of expression on the familiar face. Keith's humor — his fatal, tragic humor.

'All this'— he signalled toward his abandoned lecture —'is what they call eighteenth-century culture. The magnificent century of reason and restraint. But I wonder if a culture is the peculiar possession of a few gentlemen and ladies in Mayfair and on magnificent country estates. Can we call this culture? There's another side to all this culture business.'

Keith was off — galloping off at a tangent — nothing could stop him. He was having his little go at civilization. Janet held her hands tightly together.

London with its footpads, its lack of police protection, its terrible prisons, public executions. Read Fielding. Read Gay even. Keith made breathless incursions into Fielding. He reminded them of Smollett's horror of unsanitary London, with its polluted water supply and the filthiness of Covent Garden market. He quoted lines from Gay. There was that poem of Swift's — refuse sailing through the streets, floating over the Fleet — an uncovered river then — dead cats, the refuse of butcher's stalls, turnip-tops. Swift told the whole story. The Hogarth prints revealed the degradation of the

populace. Look at them. And at the top — all that adulation of coffee-houses, the witty conversation. Look to Swift again. Gossip — most of it gossip — no better than what passes for literary criticism to-day.

Keith came down from his lecture platform, removed at one stride the differentiation of elevation between teacher and taught, conversed with his students as equals, oblivious of the fact that they were not in possession of all the information hidden away in the card-catalogue in his study at home.

He was now shaking his whip at that proud aristocracy who got a reputation for patronizing art and learning. What of them? The fine gentlemen with titles — rowdies at Vauxhall, insulting women with their rudeness. Read 'Evelina.' Their social insolence. Talk at the opera so loud one couldn't hear the music. A child genius like Mozart offered as part of the show at Ranelagh, mixed up with tea-drinking. Haydn made money in England, but secretly despised the English, as they in turn despised all foreigners. The provincial limitations of gentlemen who made the grand tour — coming home to ridicule the French — the Italians——

'This unfortunate sentimentality about the past,' said Professor Lamberton. His listeners appeared bewildered. Several of the girls tried to take down what he was saying, got confused, looked at their neighbors' notes, shook their heads.

The bell rang. 'Don't believe all you read,' shouted Keith in a kind of desperate valedictory, 'about the heigths of eighteenth-century civilization in England.'

As Janet plunged down the steps of the Arts Building, sentences from Keith's lecture kept wheeling round and round in her mind. They had that kind of vigorous life. 'The houses in Kensington Square, their plum-colored brick as beautiful now as in the days when fashion had gathered around the court at Kensington Palace'—'The graceful classical adaptations in buildings depending for their effect upon a harmony of detail which few architects are willing to bother about'— such exclamations about beauty to students whose daily vision was the Chippewa campus! Architecture for

them meant the classic pillars of the Library and the Gothic gargoyles of the Arts building.

Four runners in track suits trotted past her on the Parade Ground. A month ago the sophomore-freshman tug of war had been staged here. It had started a pitched battle. One boy, with a fractured skull, was rushed to the hospital. For days, his father, a Norwegian farmer who spoke almost no English, did not know whether his son would recover. Six other boys escaped with broken legs, broken arms. In a general free-for-all tumble sophomores were captured by freshmen and their heads shaved; freshmen shaved by sophomores. Their bald heads were the sensational joke of the campus. Such was Chippewa college life. To-morrow the big football game of the year was being played. The campus seethed with excitement. A bonfire on the river-bank the night before, with a fitting accompaniment of hoots and yells, had kept poor nervous little Professor Henderson from getting a wink of sleep. If the home team won, there would be another wakeful night for him.

And to these students Keith, with the blood of eighteenth-century Englishmen in his veins, talked about culture, about beauty. They had listened patiently, two rows of them, but patience was their inheritance as the making of fine distinctions was Keith's. He talked about civilization — expected them to adopt a critical attitude toward a past century when they hadn't yet developed a consciousness of the civilization of their own.

Chippewa's remote connection with the arts was a state of affairs too obvious for Keith's subtle manœuvrings. Only two or three of his students had been farther from Chippewa than Chicago. None of them had heard an opera, few even a symphony, in spite of the fact that Saint Anthony was justly proud of its orchestra. Their only chance to see good drama was an occasional Shakespearean play. Their study of art was restricted to Mr. Holliday's pictures. The usual student graduated from the University without ever having heard of Mr. Holliday's gallery. Professor Field's Sunday con-

certs, which offered students with a natural love of music a dim and painful perception of the compelling power of great art, were the most civilizing influence on the Chippewa campus. Pierce said that the Scandinavian professor was also effective, but his work was limited to those of his own blood.

Nor was this all. Life for the average student lacked even common standards of decency and comfort. Cold, cheerless rooms, equipped with the minimum of rickety furniture seasoned landladies offered to the men. The women, except the few in a small dormitory, got little better. Most of the undergraduates didn't know what good food was, and accepted the monotonous fare of cheap restaurants, cafeterias, and boarding-houses without complaint. For the amenities of life, students struggled to get into the fraternities and sororities, limited to the socially attractive, preferably with money and without intellectual interests. The women's societies were even more ridiculous in their exclusiveness than the men's, which at least went in for the athletic crowd. All alike, barbarian and Greek, lacked quiet rooms for study, good conversation, books. Their interests seldom strayed from the campus. Downtown movies were the usual adventure, or cheap vaudeville, with plenty of cat-calls for the *risqué* parts. Toggery shops furnished the campus 'sport' with suits of extreme models, dashing hats, ties and socks in crashing tones. The 'co-eds'—awful word, but one couldn't get along without it — at least those who caught the eye, appeared like careful copies of favorite movie stars, their voices as loud as their clothes. Such was Janet's impression of the undergraduates, confirmed every time she crossed the campus.

And yet two years at Chippewa had taught Keith none of these things. Ten years wouldn't teach him.

Concerning the actualities here, Janet, even when fresh from Mount Holyoke, had never had any illusions. She had taken her students as they were, expected little, had done what she could. The ambition of the 'co-eds' was to teach in a small-town high school, not unlike the one where they had been educated. The town often hadn't even a library. Such

girls couldn't waste time developing a critical spirit. It would be suicidal for them if they did. Their happiest fate was to marry the town dentist or doctor, the clerk in the bank, the owner of the garage. Their highest ambition in life would be to send their children to Chippewa. The men in the College of Arts were generally serving time, taking the prerequisites to get them into the professional schools, or lazy boys content to loaf for four years before they settled down into business. Janet, in her experience, had met few men burning with a zeal for knowledge. There had been several women, and she had pitied them.

She would tell Keith exactly what she thought of his lecture, talking over students' heads, getting off the subject, playing with ideas before a class for one's personal amusement, totally disregarding the utilitarian aspect of his profession. She must tell him all this. It was her duty. Let him take his medicine, bitter but necessary. If she didn't interfere, Keith would be a failure at Chippewa, branded as an ineffective teacher by Professor Masters, despised by his colleagues, who would begin to wonder if that great work of his would ever be finished. She knew how they talked about other men.

But even if she told him, would he change? He was what he was. She had known that before her marriage, accepted him for what he was. In Chippewa he was like a mature human being playing with a child — a civilized Greek, a subtle Renaissance scholar, yoked to a barbarian. He didn't belong here.

He must finish his book. Only that could save him, prove to Masters and the rest his real worth. But Keith said it might take years to finish his book. He wouldn't hurry. What could she do?

'Didn't I manage to say a lot in fifty minutes?' asked Keith at luncheon, very much pleased with himself.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOREIGNERS

I

The foreigners, by which term was meant the members of the Romance Language department and even Professor Olafson, solitary professor of Scandinavian literature, never formed an integral part of Chippewa society. In plain language, one never felt quite at home with them. Their ideas were different. One instinctively distrusted them. Professor Jean Grammont was too polite, too amiable. Professor Guido Insigne had an embarrassing fashion of kissing a lady's hand. He had kissed Mrs. McIntosh's bony, stained fingers once, to her everlasting shame; he had kissed Mrs. Field's plump, ringed hand. Even Professor Olafson, with his bristling red mustache and red face, although his manner was fierce and his handshake an iron grip, was no more successful in satisfying the general academic taste. He was too violent, almost a boor. The Germans, all American born, were not objectionable. The rest, generally neglected by conventional Chippewa, went their way, apparently oblivious of neglect and quite content.

Professor Grammont and his very pretty and animated wife had contrived to make their grim Chippewa parlor in one of the Civil War brick houses into a gay Paris salon. They had painted the walls blue, their curtains were yellow, and their furniture was in the style of Louis XV. One wall was covered with an old tapestry. A Dégas drawing hung over the fireplace; a bleak Cézanne landscape flanked the rose-red of a Matisse Mediterranean coast. All of them bought cheap before the Americans came in and raised prices.

Keith, whose predilections for French ways was quickly

discovered, had been included in the easy and frequent entertainment Monsieur and Madame Grammont offered the members of the French department. Now Janet was also invited. With the Grammonts the preparation of food was a sacred rite. Monsieur Grammont concentrated as much anxious care upon the making of his wines as upon the running of his department. His wife's soups and pastries had the true flavor of her native Paris.

When Keith and Janet dined with them, Janet was summoned early to sit in the kitchen and watch the successive stages of dinner. The kitchen, large, full of cupboards, a coal and a gas range, an array of copper pots, pans, kettles, was an impressive sight. At madame's side hovered an undersized native of Marseilles, green like an olive, with melancholy black eyes raised anxiously to her mistress. She ran hither and yon, scraped vegetables, washed dishes, stood over the range, raised kettle lids cautiously. The fowl, stuffed with sausage and mushrooms, was already in the oven. Madame examined it, and filled the room with a delicious odor. A large kettle bubbled with soup, emitted the savor of leeks, thyme, mushrooms. Madame tasted, looked approving. Of course the real flavors one couldn't get outside of Paris. But one did what one could. Madame sighed for an open fire. For a complete cuisine one must have the coals of an oaken log. The peas wrapped in wet lettuce leaves must be cooked with Sophie standing over them while the guests were eating their soup. Could she remember, stupid girl? Last time they had been too dry. A dash of wine in the soup. A bit of sherry over the iced fruit. Yes, Sophie promised she would attend carefully to all that.

At dinner the Grammont guests talked of food. They appraised, approved where they could, offered polite suggestions. Food bolted down in the uncritical American style was not their way of enjoying madame's superb art.

Madame's patience in teaching Janet her art was a marvellous exhibition. She took her to a Jewish market, an hour's ride by trolley, and to a district Janet was convinced no other

faculty wife had invaded before, to buy garlic and dried mushrooms on a string. She dictated minute directions concerning soups and vegetables. The American prejudice against garlic, the prohibition restrictions which disregarded the fact that food without the undertone of wine was mere pulp in the mouth, inspired scoffing laughter. As final proof of her devotion to that 'beautiful little Madame Lamberton' she presented her with a bottle of wine smuggled from Burgundy the preceding summer.

But at times even Janet, with enthusiasm for French ways caught from Keith, found the Grammonts difficult to understand. On one of her informal visits she came upon both husband and wife in tears. Madame Grammont was weeping delicately into her handkerchief, and one could pretend not to notice. But there was no disregarding Monsieur Grammont's noisy boohooing. He raised his voice in mighty lament; cried out against some poignant sorrow. When he saw Janet, he made no attempt at self-control. His wife kissed their visitor on both cheeks, begged her brokenly to excuse them, wiped her eyes several times. In a few moments she was all smiles and chatting gaily about their proposed summer in France. Her husband, likewise, broke off in the midst of a choking sob, and was soon showing her his volumes of Proust, imported from Paris, and at the moment the only copies outside New York, he was certain. The discovery of others would have quite spoiled his joy in his own.

Janet got away as soon as she could. She felt she was forcing too great a strain upon them.

'Both of them crying, were they? That's nothing,' Keith assured her.

'But monsieur was sobbing.'

'He often does. It relieves his nerves.'

'Not like that, Keith. You weren't there.'

'Probably Sophie ruined an omelette. Or the printers made a slip in his new grammar. It's possible Grammont's wine may have turned sour on him. I shouldn't worry about it, dear.'

'I feel ashamed to meet monsieur again.'

'Well, *he* won't be ashamed. I can assure you of that. It's only the Anglo-Saxons who exact control from the male. Fortunately not yet from the female. All of Latin Europe is allowed the comfort of tears.'

'A big man like Monsieur Grammont!' Somehow Janet could not fathom it.

Guido Insigne, Dante scholar, who worshipped the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Keith and Janet knew only slightly. His students, few in number but very enthusiastic, said that Signor Insigne's lectures on mediæval thought had suddenly opened their eyes to that dusty age, hitherto only a name. Professor Grammont proclaimed the real learning of the Italian *savant* and made him an honored guest at his table. In most circles, however, the name of Professor Insigne raised a tempest of disapproval. Gossip reported that he kept a mistress on the other side of town and talked freely among the men about the unrestrained delights of such a union. Not all the men had the easy view of such matters held by the gentlemen of the French department. Others, indignant, reported the mistress to their wives, who in common decency felt moved to protest against his immorality whenever he was mentioned.

His only defender, as Janet heard the story, was Dolly McIntosh. She maintained that Insigne had solved a way to conduct his life on an intellectual plane. Domesticity killed the freedom of the mind. A good husband and father never got any good work done. Look at her and Thomas in their family bonds. They struggled, but it was a losing fight. The Scotch were too respectable to follow out what they saw clearly. Only an Italian had the sense to act upon his convictions. Except for his hand-kissing, she approved of him. She'd like to tell him so.

'She ought to be ashamed of herself,' Mrs. Atkins, rallying a circle of sympathizers about her at the Faculty Wives' Club, became volubly incensed. 'The mother of two children

talking that way. Boys, too. If they can't get ideals of purity from their mother, where can they get them?'

'Her boys are ruined already,' Mrs. Humphrey said. 'That youngest boy of hers started by telling Gloria there was no Santa Claus. She was only five. Then he went on to tell her there wasn't any God. He said his mother said there wasn't. She came running in to me with it.'

Mrs. Atkins proceeded to insinuate that Dolly McIntosh shouldn't be allowed to go on that way. If Mr. Atkins would only use the influence he had with President Taylor and the Regents — that influence which she constantly referred to and her enemies insisted her husband either lacked or never used except to get money for publications by the State Historical Association — both Professor McIntosh and his dangerous wife would be invited to go to some other university. It was time something drastic was done.

Professor Olafson and his wife belonged as intrinsically to Chippewa as Professor Atkins. Their home was the cultural centre, not only for the Scandinavian students of the University, an important majority, but for the large settlement of their race in Saint Anthony. Janet and Keith were invited to their house to hear the Norwegian Consul, a leader in the literary movements of his country, talk about Ibsen.

Mrs. Olafson was a woman of immense physical vigor, in appearance a descendant of the Valkyries. With the aid of two strapping Norwegian girls, at the same time domestics and members of the family, she managed her house, made her famous crullers and cakes, entertained distinguished visitors, including the King of Sweden, and was a good mother to her three children. At her table Keith pronounced such cheeses as *primöst* and *gatöst* delicious, but even his cosmopolitan palate balked on *gammelöst*. After Mrs. Peterson, bringing the laundry, paused to explain how they made it in Sweden and Norway, Janet felt somewhat sick.

The Olafsons labored to perpetuate Scandinavian culture in a State largely inhabited by Scandinavian immigrants. They selected students for the scholarships giving a year of

study at the University of Copenhagen, Upsala, or Oslo. Mrs. Olafson collected peasant costumes, fine examples of wrought-iron, brass, and copper work for a room in the Arts Building made into a Museum of Scandinavian Art. Her latest enthusiasm was modern engraved glass, in which the Swedes, in her opinion, surpassed French and Czecho-Slovakian designers and workmen. She brought back from Sweden fine examples of red, blue, and white glass made by the Orrafors Company. They must have cost a large sum.

Pierce had begun to study Norse with Professor Olafson, and by Christmas time was emitting side-splitting arrays of sound. He drank coffee with Mrs. Olafson, complimented her crullers, and then came home to tell Keith that the Olafsons were the only educators at Chippewa.

'What difference does your eighteenth-century English civilization make to your students, Keith?' he questioned. 'Does Molière change the course of their lives? Is Dante, Petrarch, or Thomas Aquinas a part of the Chippewa scene? But Norse now — Ibsen in their own language——'

'We aren't all Norse here,' Keith protested.

'But take those who are. The Olafsons are the only people in the University who have indigenous material to work upon. That's why they alone succeed in making some cultural impression upon their students. If I'd only begun studying Norse a year ago, I could be in the Ibsen play this spring. Peer Gynt. It's the only event here which strikes me as momentous. There isn't even a French Club here — let alone a French production of Molière in Chippewa history. Now, is there?'

Pierce was becoming fiercely Norse.

2

Bernard Desfontaines, venerable professor of English literature in the University of Paris, wrote to Keith that he was coming to the United States. In his old age he had stirred to visit a country for which the war had revived romantic traditions. That so home-loving a Frenchman should venture

upon an American expedition had been beyond Keith's hopes.

Here he was now in New York, writing that on his way to California he would have a few hours at his disposal in Saint Anthony to give his American pupil.

Of course so distinguished a guest they couldn't keep all to themselves. The best of Chippewa must be invited to meet him.

'He can dine with us that night. He takes a midnight train.' Keith re-read sentences of the letter. 'You decide on the guests, Janet. I want Masters, of course, and Spencer — he's the most brilliant young man here—Porter—Page——'

'What worries me,' Janet confided to Pierce, 'is the women. For a French visitor eager to know something about this country, Mr. Atkins is the most important man to ask. But his wife would immediately reduce the conversation to a social tea-party level. Even the women I'd like to ask reduce the number of men. Twelve is the absolute limit for our table.'

'Leave me out, Janet. I'll thank you in advance for your hospitable intentions.'

'I wouldn't dare. You're absolutely indispensable in helping Keith steer things.'

'Omit the ladies. Have a dinner for men only.'

'Could I do that, Keith?'

Keith had no objection to anything, provided that he wasn't bothered.

The two fixed upon a tentative list. A wire was dispatched to Bernard Desfontaines, the guests were invited. All accepted. In the train of such events Madame Grammont bustled in, offering herself and her Sophie to assist with the dinner. She and Janet went to the Jewish market, canvassed the possibilities of the neighborhood fruits and vegetables in December, settled upon the menu.

On the afternoon preceding the French visitor's arrival, the Masters' chauffeur brought a hamper of wine with a note from Mrs. Masters. In the morning Pierce's flowers arrived. There were even English anemones for a low bowl on the

table, the first she had ever seen in Saint Anthony. The dinner-party couldn't help being a success. Keith went down to the train, settled his venerable teacher in his hotel, explained the arrangements old Dr. Taylor, the President of Chippewa, had made for his seeing their little corner of the United States in a few hours. He returned in a state of jumping nerves. He and Desfontaines had had a wonderful talk at the hotel, wonderful. 'No one like him,' he kept repeating all through luncheon as he tried unsuccessfully to push down a little food.

Desfontaines represented for Keith what Denbroch had once meant for Janet. She not only understood his excitement, but began to feel it herself. But *she* must try to keep calm.

Madame Grammont and Sophie arrived early in the afternoon, bringing with them a creamy dessert; a guarded secret, suggesting almonds, a delicate light wine, perhaps, or the first sip of apricot brandy. Upon the Frenchwoman's entrance, Janet's kitchen, for once not too large, creaked with the weight of great events. Madame was crisp, decisive. Sophie ran at her mistress's bidding. Even Miss Erickson, the student-waitress from the Home Economics department, who arrived at five, was moulded into shape. One recognized power in Madame Grammont.

'My countryman will be surfeited with the American cuisine by this time,' she murmured from her stool placed in the centre of operations. 'For this temporary return to France he will be grateful.' She rose, made the rounds once more of the array of dishes on the stove, stirred, tasted, approved. 'It will be a successful French dinner,' was her final pronouncement.

During a lull in the concluding rites she sent Janet upstairs to see that Keith was ready to receive his guests. She had been blessed with a husband many more years than Janet and knew a male's uncertain ways. 'A last quick glance is not superfluous,' she said, looking once more at the cream sauce Sophie was stirring, but thinking of men.

At the first peal of the doorbell, madame tiptoed toward the hall, nodded. 'It is he,' she whispered, her face all smiles. A second ring. A torrent of French words. 'My Jean has arrived. They will talk together for a few minutes. That is good.'

She gave Sophie an inspiring glance, reminded her once more, 'You toil for one of the learned, Sophie. A great scholar from the University of Paris. Be zealous, my girl.'

Sophie stirred. Her dark eyes glowed, her olive cheek had a touch of carnation red.

Janet, in an orange velvet evening dress, greeted her husband's guests, gathered in the living-room after dinner. In the centre stood a tall man with a long white beard, leaning down toward Dr. Spencer. Spencer, his shabby brown suit, in contrast to the evening dress of the others, making him the most conspicuous person in the company, was talking in loud, rapid French, with an accompaniment of violent gestures. The rest looked on with quiet amusement.

Professor Desfontaines, detaching himself from Spencer, bowed before the wife of his American friend.

'A great pleasure,' he murmured, 'a long-awaited pleasure.'

The Frenchman's lined face was the color of parchment, but his sunken black eyes had none of the book-worm's dullness.

'Monsieur Desfontaines has just come from Chicago. He actually likes it!' Keith laughed.

'Is it mistaken of me?' he interjected quickly. 'Yes, I found Chicago charming. So energetic. Absolutely irresistible. Every one hurrying about. As if existence were really momentous. That is very fine, madame, to have business sufficiently important so that one is willing to hurry.' He laughed, a deep laugh with an echo of disillusionment. 'But am I alone in liking your Chicago?'

'We'd expect you to prefer New York,' Spencer said.

'Oh, no. That is Europe again. And I came over to see America. A splendid city, of course, but without the future

of Chicago. The centre of everything. It ought to be your capital, madame. That shabby southern city, Washington. Pardon. A remote shadow of Paris. I do not care for Washington.'

'Henry Adams said it was the dullest national capital in the world,' Keith assured him.

The French guest laughed again. 'That is good, very good. I haven't seen them all. But I agree. I was two days in Washington. Enough — it was enough.'

The guests began to depart. At last only Dr. Spencer remained, looking up at the stranger, like a hungry dog hoping to be fed.

'I regret, Dr. Spencer,' said Monsieur Desfontaines, 'that we have no further opportunity to continue our most interesting discussion. I shall remember your ideas, contemplate them at my leisure.' He bowed. 'The few moments remaining I must give to my friends. Good-bye, sir. A great pleasure to meet you.'

Spencer, unwilling, was bowed from the room.

Janet sat down on the sofa beside Monsieur Desfontaines while Keith, at the door, was saying good-night to the last of his guests.

'I have wanted to tell you, madame. Your husband was a dear student of mine. A very young man then. Only a boy. But I felt then, and I am surer now——' His voice dropped to lower tones. 'We were talking about his book at the hotel this morning. In the past we had many discussions of literary matters. Not always agreeing. And now once more. May I be permitted to tell you — what you already know? But to assure you of my confidence is a pleasure. We expect in America not so much thoroughness in scholars, so much patience, depth, perhaps. The Americans too seldom wait for the years of wisdom to savor their thought. An eager young nation. I understand. But your husband is an unusual man, Madame Lamberton, a stranger to all that. It is surprising. So much delicacy of perception, understanding of detail. And yet the sweeping comprehension of the whole.

I respect him. Some day, madame, he will be a distinguished scholar. But, my dear lady'— his old eyes rested kindly upon her —'we must have patience. Perhaps we must wait for him a long time.'

Tears rushed to Janet's eyes. She looked down, wiped them quickly away. The Frenchman took her hand in his long, thin fingers, the fingers of an old man, bent over, kissed it.

'I know that you comprehend,' he said.

Keith, returning, drew up a chair, and smiled at them both sitting cosily together on the sofa.

'I have been telling madame of my admiration for your projected work, monsieur.'

Janet perceived a quick illumination in Keith's face. Here was one of the few men whose praise he valued. From that eager look in her husband's face she measured the terrible isolation and loneliness of a serious American scholar.

Professor Desfontaines took out his watch. His visit was almost over. The bell rang. President Taylor's car was waiting to take him to the station. Keith got him into his fur-lined coat, Janet and her new friend said good-bye, and Keith started off with him toward his train.

'On to California,' he called back to her as she stood in the doorway.

CHAPTER VII

FAMILY BUDGETS

1

EVERY one in Saint Anthony remarked upon the beautiful mild winter. Bright sunshine, frequent thaws, the ground scarcely white. Christmas came with only a pretty accompaniment of snowflakes. No cold. This wasn't winter at all. Those famous Chippewa seasons of ice and snow, stretching greedily over the months from November to April, the thermometer down to twenty and thirty degrees below zero for weeks at a time, were passing away. Winters weren't what they used to be.

Then, late one afternoon, the snow began falling with steady persistence. During the night the wind howled around the corners, groaned, cried out in muttering tones. Drowsy Saint Anthony citizens, drawing their blankets more tightly around them, had an instinctive feeling that winter had come at last. They awoke to a changed world. Drifts of snow covered half the lower windows. Streets were trackless white plains. Even the milkmen failed to make their rounds. No street-cars were running. The quiet of snow-bound city pavements was unbroken.

Mary was delighted with the weather. This was the real thing. She was up earlier than usual, stamping through the house, singing a gay tune.

'No classes to-day.' Keith looked out upon the snow, still whirling through the air.

'The idea!' scoffed Mary. 'Of course there are.'

Keith led her to the window. 'Where is that long, scholastic procession coming from the street-cars?'

'I'm going to my classes as usual.'

Mary floundered through the unbroken drifts, demonstrating to the weaklings watching at the window the tough spirit inherited from her pioneer ancestors. In less than half an hour she was back. Only the janitors applauded her courage. There was no one else to do it. Her ear looked suspicious. Keith rubbed snow on the whitened lobe until it began to turn a purplish red, even though Mary steadily insisted it wasn't frozen. Pierce predicted it would peel and look an awful mess. These Chippewa natives, for all their high talk, were not as impervious to a temperature of thirty degrees below zero as they thought. Mary was stoical. She insisted upon getting luncheon, since Janet had all of them on her hands, and conversed cheerfully through the meal upon the subject of Chippewa blizzards.

The next day, after the snow plough had dug tunnels through the streets and sidewalks, Saint Anthony tried to go about its usual business. 'Cold but dry' was the phrase on the lips of the milkman, butcher boy, grocery boy, who shared the State pride in weather. Mary, with her ear badly swollen, was not cast down. All vehicles were now on runners, which rasped, screamed, screeched in the cold. Sleighbells had a frosty sound. Pedestrians breathed out vaporous clouds as they hurried along, beating their arms across their chests to keep the blood flowing fast.

As the thermometer continued to hover in the depths of twenty degrees, Janet regretted the warm coat she had presented to Mrs. Peterson the preceding spring when she was packing up. Pierce was wearing the coon coat and cap of his Harvard days. Keith had found some old ear-laps.

'You must get yourself a fur coat,' Keith commanded one morning at breakfast. 'In this climate it's indispensable.'

He passed over to Janet a letter from his mother, who lived in Florence. She dreaded Mrs. Lamberton's letters. Behind the gentility of phrase lurked the suggestion always that she needed financial assistance from her only son. The lira was steadily rising. She and her daughter Helen, who had always lived comfortably in Italy on a restricted income, were now

somewhat pinched. They ought to give up their apartment, a delightful one with a balcony overlooking gardens, for a cheap pension in one of the less desirable parts of Florence. But here they were close to their Italian and English friends. Helen's Italian was improving all the time. At a dinner-party a few nights ago, Count Bordoni had complimented it highly.

'I wish we could spare mother something,' Keith remarked. 'She must be having a hard time.'

Janet frowned. Mrs. Lamberton's last letter had made Keith lament his inability to pay the passage of his mother and sister to the United States that they might get acquainted with their charming new relative. 'It's absolutely impossible,' she decreed with finality, congratulating herself that her father never gave them any trouble. After a life spent in a variety of parishes, he had taken refuge, after his wife's death, in her brother's house in Cleveland. Henry, like most clergymen's sons, had preferred business to the Church, and automobiles had made him rich. Her father read philosophy all day, and no longer worried about men's souls.

Keith returned to the question of coats. 'Why not go down to-day to look at fur coats?'

'I don't need one. If it's cold when I go out, I'll wear a sweater under the coat I have.'

'In this climate! What you have is like paper.'

'I don't need a new coat.'

'Then I'll sell my stocks. If you won't — I'll see about it to-day.' Keith, thwarted in any expenditure, immediately planned to convert the last of his inheritance into immediate cash. 'I'm going to keep my wife warm, at any rate.' Keith looked like a sulky small boy.

Janet saw herself defeated. That evening she examined the newspaper advertisements for bargains. All the stores announced slashing reductions, accompanied by pictures of Parisian-looking ladies wearing fur coats and cloth coats rich in fur, all more or less similar and remorselessly sacrificed at half-price. But even then they weren't cheap. Here was a new problem for the family budget. Of course she'd have to

buy clothes sometimes. A trousseau couldn't last forever.

From the casual conversation of faculty wives Janet had discovered that Birkheimer's, in spite of what everybody said against it, was the place to buy coats cheap. So to Birkheimer's Janet went. She pushed through crowds of shoppers, was jammed into an elevator, shoved out at the third floor. Women, darting ahead of her, demanded the immediate attention of the clerks. In an atmosphere heavy with cheap perfume, pompous floorwalkers paced over velvet carpets, gazing up toward the artificial flowers and vines trailing around snowy pillars. Clerks shouted back and forth to one another. There was nervous tension on all sides. Janet stood motionless, looking around her. She had been warned against these cheap stores. No politeness. Long, wearisome waits. Well, this was what lack of money forced one to endure.

At last a tall, stylish young woman approached her. For a moment she thought the clerk was about to shake hands with her. Then her manner changed quickly from cordiality to abrupt haughtiness.

'Is there anything I can do for you?' she asked in a voice not native to Chippewa, but with a suggestion of the South in its warmth.

Janet became humble. The clerk's manner suggested that she measured her customer's lack of money. If one could only feel grand on a slender pocketbook. 'I want to look at — at very inexpensive coats,' she faltered.

Before her marriage, Janet had bought her clothes at Rheinhardt's, a small, quiet shop, without paying too much attention to the price of what pleased her. But that was over now.

Hundreds of coats hung on racks, all of them more or less alike, as the advertisements had faithfully represented them, and loaded with cheap fur.

'I think I want brown,' she murmured to the superior person swinging the coats on the racks, 'and not much fur.'

Herds of shoppers gathered around the racks, pulled out coats, examined price tags. Janet dropped wearily into a

chair. It didn't matter which coat she took. They were all equally abominable. She watched the clerk examining and rejecting successive garments. As she looked, she thought of music, dance music, a pale blue georgette dress. This woman, she was sure, she had seen at a dance. It was queer the way memory tricked one. Mrs. Early. The clerk looked exactly like Mrs. Early.

'I hope you'll excuse me,' Janet exclaimed impulsively, when the clerk returned. 'But you look so much like an acquaintance of mine, Mrs. Early, that I——'

The young woman dropped the coats on the chair opposite Janet. 'I am Mrs. Early,' she announced. 'I work here Saturdays and during sales.'

Janet, conscious of her defiant tone, was puzzled by it. 'This is an amusing experience. When I saw you, I immediately began thinking of music — jazz tunes. Of course we've met at the Faculty Dancing Club.'

Mr. Early was an instructor in politics, a handsome young man from Alabama.

A queer expression passed over Mrs. Early's face. 'I owe you an apology. I'm awfully sorry. I recognized you right away, forgot where I was, and put out my hand. And when you—— You wouldn't understand. But I ought to have known better. Evelyn Spencer had talked about you.'

'You mean you thought I didn't want to see you?'

'Other women from the University have been here. They didn't recognize me either. But for different reasons.'

Mrs. Early had a naturally smart style. Janet could imagine her as the most popular girl in her Alabama town, in the midst of the parties, young men crowding around her at dances. Evidently working in Birkheimer's was a humiliating experience after all that.

'It's a lucky chance for me — your being here to help me. It's so hard to find what you like below a certain price. And I must be economical.'

'You can't do better for your money anywhere else. We'll find something.'

They tried on the coats Mrs. Early had brought, decided they wouldn't do. She made a second tour of the racks and returned with another armful.

'Here's one you may like.' She held out a brown coat with a touch of civet fur.

Janet tried it on, looked at herself in the glass. It wasn't unbecoming. When she was used to it, she felt sure she would like it.

'This will do very well. Fifty dollars. It's more than I should pay, but I suppose I can't get one for less.'

She sat down, wrote out a check, gave her address, pulled on her gloves.

'I suppose it's very silly,' Mrs. Early was saying, 'but when any of the University women come here now, I get out of the way. I saw Mrs. Humphrey stepping out of the elevator yesterday. I just had time to hide behind a rack of coats.'

Janet felt her face grow suddenly hot.

'Mrs. Spencer had the same experience.'

'How is she getting on? I haven't seen her since the night they had dinner with us before Christmas.'

'You haven't heard what she's doing, then?'

'No.'

'She's dancing in a musical comedy show at the Garrick. When she heard they were putting it on, she went right down and got the part at once. She's wonderful. Mr. Early and I went down to see it.'

'She dances superbly. She must have been lonely staying at home.'

'It wasn't that. You see they're going to have a baby. And they haven't anything. She didn't know at first what they were going to do. And then this chance came.'

Of course people had babies, whether they could afford it or not. Janet tried not to look surprised.

'But her dancing started the old ladies talking. I thought they'd told every one. At a matinée the first person she saw was Mrs. Atkins in one of the orchestra seats. The next

time there was a row of them all staring at her. And students, too. Then they began calling. Busy-bodies like Mrs. Field and Mrs. Humphrey who hadn't even taken the trouble to speak to her before. They hinted she was ruining her husband — making herself the subject of gossip. But she didn't say a word — tell them why she was doing it. "Let them talk," she said. She disconnected the doorbell and then got a little undisturbed sleep while they were pounding down below.'

'I'm glad you told me.'

'Please don't say anything about the baby. She doesn't want them to know.'

Upon arriving home, Janet entered Keith's study wearing her new coat. 'Do you like it?'

'Yes.' His tone was uncertain. 'Not so well as the one you were wearing. But possibly I was accustomed to that. Why didn't you get a fur coat, darling?'

'I don't like them. Too heavy and warm. This will do very well.'

She began to tell him her news about Mrs. Early and Mrs. Spencer. 'You see how useful other wives are to their husbands,' she teased him. 'Perhaps they'd take me on at Birkheimer's too.'

Keith was still studying the new coat. 'You're sure you got the coat you wanted?'

'Oh, yes,' she answered carelessly. 'It's what every one is wearing. I got it at Birkheimer's, you know.' Of course such wit was lost on Keith.

Her husband puffed away at his favorite pipe. 'Do you think she — Mrs. Spencer — likes to dance in that Garrick show?' he came out at last.

She hesitated. Should she tell him? There was so much helpless innocence in Keith. Instinctively one shielded him from the truth. 'I don't think she'd do it if she didn't like it,' she said.

2

Mrs. Peterson was cleaning the house. Janet was recovering from a cold, and Keith had telephoned for her to come.

'Poor things!' said Mrs. Peterson, resting in the midst of her labors. Like all wise conversationalists, she preferred to talk about what she knew best, in her case the faculty families. 'They don't give theirselves half enough to eat. The money goes for show. Clothes an' them bridge lunches. That's what I tell my man. What they set out for me — it won't keep up my strength. I take a bag o' Rye Crisp an' some good Swede cheese along to keep me goin.' It ain't just stinginess. They got in the way o' not thinkin' much about their stomachs.'

There was much wisdom to be learned from Mrs. Peterson, a hard worker, quickly rested by a little talk.

'The way them ladies scheme. Gaddin' off the day I come to wash an' leavin' me with dinner to get for the kids. It ain't as if they was ordinary children. They been reasoned with — they call it — too much. No mind to 'em. Plain sassy. But I keep my tongue to myself an' thank God they're no belongin's o' mine.'

Mrs. Peterson also dropped hints about the way they rushed her around trying to get their money's worth. But the more they hurried her, the slower she became. 'Now I work hard for you, Mrs. Lamberton, because you treat me human — ain't afraid t' take a minute off to talk for fear it's costin' you somethin'. An' not expectin' me to do everythin' in one day. Of all the puny children I ever seen,' she continued, 'there's none to beat the spindlin' ones around this campus. Brains maybe, but more'n likely it's skimpy feedin'. Them ladies pretendin' it's high-toned not to eat nothin'. What d' them professors keep goin' on? Look at Professor Field now. He's a shadder. Maybe your man's just natural puny, but mostly it's not gettin' enough to eat. Good steak an' onions — an' coffee with real cream. An' a big slice o' pie — that's what I hand out to my man after he's worked hard his eight hours. An' the kids as good as him, too. Them

measly little salads — they talk about vitamines — I don't need to talk about 'em — we eat 'em. You can't work on a leaf o' lettuce.'

Mrs. Peterson had no sympathy with scrimping in food. Nor did she understand why many of her patrons lived as they did. Janet might have told her many things. Since her visit to the Spencer household, and now with the fresh memory of what Mrs. Early had told her, she was making new calculations. If she on the salary of an assistant professor found the purchase of a winter coat upsetting to her household budget, what must similar problems be to instructors' wives? An instructor at Chippewa earned less than a good mechanic, who had no books to buy, could wear old clothes at his work, had no social pretensions to keep up, and fixed his ambitions no higher than owning his home, buying a Ford, and sending his children through high school. A labor union protected him from exploitation, fought against powerful corporations, dictated hours and conditions of work, kept a trade from getting overcrowded. But a college instructor was as weak and spiritless as a bookkeeper. Every one imposed on him. He was ill-paid and overworked. His job was insecure. He was criticised for living in shabby quarters, wearing old clothes, neglecting his social duties. Janet marvelled that generations of intellectual slaves tolerated such a life, brought women into it, children. And all the false pride of a university neighborhood, keeping up appearances, giving one's self the airs, the exclusiveness of the rich. She understood why Mrs. Early sold coats at Birkheimer's, and was ashamed of doing it; why Mrs. Spencer had returned to the kind of dancing that brought pay instead of compliments. Those women daring to criticise her! They ought to get down on their knees to her. Mrs. Atkins — Mrs. Field — all that censorious crew. How she hated them!

3

Some of the instructors' wives met weekly at one another's houses for tea. Janet's cheap coat proved to be her initiation

into a circle hitherto closed to her. When Mrs. Colfax telephoned to invite Mrs. Lamberton to her home, she explained, 'Mrs. Early told me to ask you.'

Janet's hostess, a handsome, bouncing young woman, whose Grecian features fitted oddly with an ungainly figure, pulled her into the living-room. 'You know every one here. At least you ought to. Mrs. Early — of course. Mrs. Montgomery ——' A small woman, with heavy braids of light brown hair wound around her head coronet fashion, lifted quiet blue eyes. 'Mrs. Slater'll be along after five. She doesn't get out of the registrar's office until then.' Mrs. Colfax settled Janet on the sofa beside Mrs. Montgomery, then sat down heavily in a straight-backed chair. 'You brought your sewing? That's right. We always do the family mending at our tea-parties, and,' she added in chesty tones, 'express our views.'

Mrs. Montgomery let out a little gurgle of protest. 'You mean you do, Lily.'

Lily took a deep breath. 'I have so many views,' she explained as she upset the contents of a mending-basket on the table beside her. 'Of course I talk too much. I overdo everything. I've ruined my figure by twenty-seven years of overeating. And if I'm not careful, I'll ruin my husband by saying more than I should.'

'Harold seems naturally fortified against ruin,' Mrs. Montgomery remarked with an assuring smile.

Mr. Colfax, a cheerful instructor in the geology department, was fat like his wife and also conversational. Husbands and wives, contrary to the general opinion, are often made after the same model.

'But I'm cutting down on the grocery bills, Anna Montgomery. This remarkable lady,' she repeated for Janet's benefit, 'feeds herself and her husband on eight dollars a week.'

'That is, if we're strong-minded and never go out to meals,' Mrs. Montgomery corrected her.

'Harold doesn't take to it much. He likes to eat as well as

I. But I tell him it's good for him — that lean meals'll restore a naturally handsome figure.'

This little group in which Janet found herself for the first time had come to Chippewa within the past four years. They were united by the fact that their husbands were instructors at the bottom of the academic scale, engaged in writing doctors' dissertations or other learned works, and that they were intimately concerned with helping them.

Mrs. Early was working in Birkheimer's to pay for the publication of her husband's dissertation.

'At Knickerbocker University they have to be published before a man gets his degree. It's a terrible expense. Close to a thousand dollars if you have to get it out yourself. There isn't much chance of a commercial publisher for that kind of book.'

Mrs. Colfax reminded Janet of Mary, but she was more violent, less educated, and perhaps more original. While she darned her first sock with rapid and unscrupulous stitches, she related the important biographical facts about herself and her husband. Harold was the principal of her town high school when she was a senior. He was attending summer school then for graduate credit. He got a job next as superintendent of schools in another town. They saved every penny they could. She made devil's-food cakes on Saturday to sell.

'Lucky thing the women in that place were lazy. I made nut bread, too. Tons of it.'

Harold had risked a year off for study. At last he got a chance to teach in the University. Part-time at first. She rented rooms to students, made more devil's-food cakes and nut bread.

'I've found a new way to add to the family income,' she announced. 'I told you about the girl who practises on the piano two hours every morning while Harold is at the University. Now I've added a man that wants to make the University band. He comes and plays on his cornet for an hour when she gets through. It seems nobody could stand his first

painful toots. So he pays well. Fortunately I haven't nerves. While he blows, I type on Harold's dissertation. Worked eight hours yesterday,' she boasted, looking around at her audience for approval. 'My neck was so stiff I couldn't sleep last night.'

'Mrs. Colfax is a wonderful wife,' Mrs. Montgomery laughed. 'When Harold becomes a great man some day, I shall tell them he achieved distinction through the tireless efforts of a faithful wife.'

Mrs. Colfax's cheeks became more ruddy. 'Well, I don't care. I want Harold to get ahead.'

'Of course you do, dear. So do we all desire fame for our husbands.' Mrs. Montgomery tilted her neat little head, with its weight of hair, on one side, and examined her stitches critically. 'I'm envious of you, Lily. I might have nabbed that cornet man.'

'You can't have him now, my friend.' Mrs. Colfax plunged toward the kitchen to get tea ready. 'Clara'll be coming soon.'

4

The day the tea-drinkers assembled at Helen Early's house, Lily Colfax got started on her opinion of the Faculty Wives' Club. She always saw through the nonsense of everything right away, she explained to Janet. It was an unfortunate endowment, but she couldn't help it. Immediately upon her arrival at Chippewa, she had been conscious of the hypocrisy and social errors of those women.

'You mixed up with them?' she inquired of Janet, adjusting Harold's sock to her darning-ball. 'I went once or twice to their meetings. But I can't stand that gang myself.'

It was a riddle to her why women wanted to pretend they weren't poor when they were. Everybody knew what Harold earned. It wasn't any private affair you kept locked up in the closet. What was the use of acting grand when you couldn't afford it? Take clothes, for instance. She knew how women managed to appear stylish on a small outlay of money. It

was a game, played by all silly women. Not just faculty wives. One way was to have two or three frocks from Rheinhardt's sent to them on approval, to be copied in a hurry, with or without the aid of a cheap dressmaker, before they were sent back. Not a particularly honorable transaction, but honesty and fairness are expensive companions to poverty. Another way was to buy clothes at Birkheimer's, to which women attached carefully preserved Rheinhardt labels. Helen Early could tell a thing or two. She'd seen professors' wives buying clothes there, even though they stated officially that they couldn't find anything fit to wear except in the one approved shop.

'But the rank and file of us make our own clothes, Lily,' Anna Montgomery said. 'I suppose we don't bear inspection. They've got that inevitable made-with-loving-hands look.' She held up a piece of blue silk she was embroidering with bright colors.

At five o'clock, when Mrs. Slater came from the registrar's office, her husband was with her.

'I came along on the chance Paul might be here,' he said.

John Slater was a mild-looking man, with a polite manner slightly more urbane than was usual in Chippewa. He obviously liked the society of women. He sat down and began at once to talk about the book he was writing on the coöperative movement. Mrs. Slater, a little brown woman drooping into her middle twenties, had little to say. She looked very tired. To do his book up right, her husband was explaining to Mrs. Montgomery, he ought to spend the next summer in Russia, but he didn't see how he could manage it. Mrs. Montgomery looked sympathetic.

Mrs. Early and Lily Colfax conversed with Mrs. Slater. They seemed to be discussing some book she had just finished reading.

'A book on modernism,' Mr. Slater interpreted for Janet's benefit, pausing in his flow of talk for a moment. 'My wife's getting rid of the fundamentalist doctrines by degrees,' he laughed, looking very superior.

Mrs. Slater turned quickly. 'I never said I was giving up my religion. There are some things I wouldn't give up, even for my husband.' Under her dull voice was a note of heated irritation.

'I should say not,' applauded Lily Colfax. 'Hold on to it as long as you can, Clara. That's what I did with mine.'

Mrs. Slater said no more until she rose and announced that she must start home and get supper. Her husband taught a class that evening.

'Always on the job,' he told them cheerfully. 'Both Clara and I.'

'She works harder than you do,' Lily told him. Like Mary Giddings she had a great belief in the spoken word.

Janet looked toward Mrs. Slater. Without knowing why, one pitied her.

5

Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery lived in two stuffy furnished rooms in Professor Evans' house. Janet climbed steep steps covered with worn chocolate-colored oilcloth and knocked on a seasick green door. She was the first guest to arrive. Mr. Montgomery, a tall, intense man, rose from the table in one corner of the room, where he had been working.

'I'm afraid I came too early,' Janet apologized. 'I almost always do.'

Mrs. Montgomery's tinkling laugh had the delicate tone of a fine bell. 'I'm glad Robert has to stop work. I've been trying to make him go for a walk. Haven't I, Robert? He's putting the last touches on his book. Every chance minute he has.'

Mrs. Montgomery was different from the other young faculty wives. The squalor of poverty didn't touch her. She brought the glow of her own delicate and exquisite spirit to light up any poor place where she might be. She had an indomitable will that accepted privation gaily. As the daughter of a college professor, she was saved from Helen Early's sensitiveness and Lily Colfax's bristling pride. She under-

stood that her present position was a temporary discomfort and led to something better. She had confidence in her husband's ability, which would eventually be recognized. It took time and patience.

The older men respected Robert Montgomery. There were a few rough corners that needed smoothing down. But Mrs. Montgomery could do it. Every one who met her felt at once, as Janet had, her power. It was not only because of her beauty. One was glad of that. What was even more impressive was an inner strength. Part of it was intelligence. Not all. She would follow her husband anywhere, grace any position, help him to get to the top.

Anna Montgomery was still sewing on the dress she had been embroidering at Mrs. Early's house. She admitted she hated to sew. But it happened to be one of the few things she could do.

'I haven't Lily's energy nor Helen's enterprise, nor,' she added, looking with that serenity of gaze which made one remember her from a first meeting, 'the talent of little Evelyn Spencer. She's coming this afternoon. I've promised to help her with the layette. She's never sewed, poor child, and is terribly awkward. My sister had a baby last summer, so I know just what she needs to get ready.'

Evelyn Spencer entered the sitting-room with the same flourish she made nightly on the Garrick stage. Her dress was more subdued, the crimson replaced by a plain black gown which did not entirely hide the ungainly lines of her figure. Ballet skirts were probably more successful. Her curls were gone. But in manner she was just the same.

'Hello, everybody,' she said, shaking hands all around the circle to a steady accompaniment of giggles. 'Swell beads you've got on, Lily. I'm sure glad to see you, Mrs. Lamberton. It's an age since I've laid eyes on you. Helen told you the news about me,' she said. 'Isn't it funny?' She giggled again.

She brought out a bundle of flannelette the moment she got rid of her coat and hat. She held up a diminutive garment.

'Isn't it cute, girls? Looks about the size to dress up a kitten. I've been trying to sew in the sleeves the way you showed me, Anna.'

Anna examined them. 'You're doing very well. But I'd make the stitches just a wee bit smaller. So they won't show, you know.'

'It's that awful thimble you make me wear. It's no use. I've tried and tried. You see I push through the needle with this finger.' She indicated a very much-pricked fourth digit.

'Then put your thimble on that finger.'

'Sure enough. I never thought of that.'

At the first stitch the thimble rolled to the floor. 'Look at that, Anna. It's too big.'

Anna crawled under the table to rescue it. 'See if mine's smaller. There. That'll do.'

'You're going to teach me feather-stitching to-day. See this silk I got for it. I like the French blue. Don't you?'

'Evelyn's a troublesome pupil,' Anna complained. 'She wants to learn everything at once.'

Mrs. Spencer sat humped over in her chair, her nose close to her sewing, her tongue coming out between her lips as she made each clumsy stitch on a trial scrap of cloth. 'It's terrible. Not a bit like yours.'

Her teacher showed her once more, drew a pencilled line on the material so that the feather-stitching would keep straight. 'Now try again.'

After a few pulls at her thread, Mrs. Spencer appealed to the others. 'I say it's pretty good,' she boasted.

Reluctantly she put aside her work when tea was served. 'I never thought I'd want a baby,' she babbled, 'but it's the queerest thing the way you change your ideas. Even Billy don't seem to mind. He was awful sore at first. I want a girl. They're more company. Then, when Billy's soaring off in his philosophy, I'll have some one to talk to. I've been noticing babies more lately. They're awfully cute.'

'You're getting to be a frightful bore, Evelyn, talking about that baby all the time,' teased Lily, whose chance to express

herself that afternoon had been reduced to a minimum. 'Can't you think of anything else?'

'Of course not.' She put her cup and saucer back on the tea-table. 'Now I'm going to sew a little more. The rest of you've got more time to waste than I.'

'The momentous life,' commented Anna, examining the latest attempts at a feather-stitch. 'That's good. I think you can start on the gown now. Round the neck and down the front. See. Where you've turned in your hem.'

'Won't it be sweet!' exclaimed Evelyn.

When Clara Slater came, she offered to help with the feather-stitching.

'That's awfully dear of you, Clara. But I want to do everything myself. You understand?'

Mrs. Spencer certainly gave one the impression of supreme satisfaction. She was like a child dressing a new doll. The baby would be a good thing for her, even if it might, at times, interfere with philosophy.

'I'm trying to save enough money to have a dozen of everything,' Evelyn Spencer was telling Mrs. Slater.

CHAPTER VIII

CHILDREN OF LEARNING

1

The new orthopedic surgeon in the Medical School had given Mr. and Mrs. Page fresh hope that Bertie might escape going through life a cripple. Dr. Hunter wasn't too encouraging. If all went well, Bertie with a thick-soled shoe might get rid of his crutches and use only a cane. Bertie, aged eight, with the ambition to go to West Point and be an army officer, said he wasn't afraid to try again. Anything was better than staying the way he was. So his parents submitted once more to torture and watched their son through his operation.

As soon as he came home, Janet went to see him. She and Bertie had always been good friends.

'It's too early to tell much,' Mrs. Page said. 'His leg is still in a cast. What I can't bear is his disappointment if the operation hasn't helped. But he's a good, patient child. He'll be brave when the time comes.'

Bertie was the only child of middle-aged parents, a precocious, delicate, nervous boy, who would probably have been frail even if he had escaped infantile paralysis. His brief history up to his eighth year was a chronicle of succeeding diseases, each of them almost fatal. But he had come through all these crises as if by miracle, a tired little ghost with an untiring zest for life, dearer to his parents every time. In the process of self-abnegation, white-haired Mrs. Page had become a saint, a lovely, agreeable saint wearing her halo with careless ease.

Janet put her arms around Mrs. Page and kissed her. 'I'm so glad it's over. We're all hoping the best things. Keith and I every night when Bertie was in the hospital——'

Mrs. Page was always calm. Smiling at Janet, she began to talk in her simple way. Her rich voice, full of tragic undertones, reminded Janet of a 'cello. The suffering she had banished from her face seemed registered there.

'Tom McIntosh is upstairs with Bertie. They're great friends, you know. But I must send him home soon. He's too exciting for an invalid. Perhaps we'd better go upstairs and see what they're doing.'

Bertie, from his bed, waved his hand to Janet. 'I'm doing fine,' he shouted in his piping voice, 'and having company already.'

His room was the kingdom of an indulged, much-loved child. Pictures of pirates and knights in armor decorated the bright yellow walls to suit Bertie's martial spirit. There were plants and flowers in the sunny windows, low shelves full of books and toys.

Wee Tom turned shy, dark eyes upon the intruders. He was sitting on a chair beside Bertie, bent over a small table writing with a stub of a pencil.

'Tom's writing things down for me,' Bertie informed his mother. 'He's been saying them over, and I wanted to keep them. They're awful nice. Give it here, Tom. You see — poetry.'

Tom held out his smeared page.

'Read it, mums,' commanded Bertie. 'Start with the first one.'

'Robin, Robin, where have you been?
Up in the old elm making my nest.
How, Robin? How do you make your nest?
Out of strings and old bent grass,
That is the way I make my nest.'

While Mrs. Page read, Tom's eyes burned from their black depths. Already his face showed the distinguished features of his father, with the added charm of his mother's eyes and warming smile. Looking at him, Janet decided that it wouldn't be a waste of time to have a child if he turned out like Wee Tom.

'That's very nice,' Mrs. Page said. 'Is it a piece you learned in school?'

His face flashed out laughter. Chuckling to himself, he shook his head.

'He made it up,' Bertie explained. 'He made 'em all up. Read the one about Bob White.'

Mrs. Page read, her mournful tones giving a momentous tragedy to Tom's simple lines.

'There was a quail a-sittin'
On the branch of an oak.
Along came a hunter
And he shot for a joke.

'As the quail flew away,
To her nest in the wheat,
She whistled, Bob White,
You dare not eat.'

'And the one about his hen on the farm where Tom goes in summer,' the invalid ordered, settling back on his pillow.

'My little hen hides her nest away
In the straw and in the hay.
She lays each egg so big and white,
And then she cackles with all her might.'

'Those are remarkable, Tom. Very good for a little boy. I didn't know you wrote verses like this.'

Wee Tom squirmed in his chair.

'There's just one more,' Bertie sighed. He looked very tired. 'You done with that, Tom?'

'Yes, here it is.'

'I like this one best. About Uncle Joe. It's the longest.'

'Up in Joe's garret I'm a-havin' lots o' fun.
Found a goblin an' a tin horn an' an old shot gun.
Found a red squirrel a-blinkin' and a-rollin' of its eyes,
And a-eatin' of our butter-nuts with funny little sighs.

'I'm really in Joe's garret, Uncle Joe it is, you see.
When he was a little boy, just like me, he used to play,
All kinds of things, right in this very room.
He even fired the shot gun, he says it went off boom!

'And when they went to look for him, almost scared to death,
They found him in a feather bed plumb out o' breath.
They didn't spank him either, for they were so very glad
To find he was all sound and whole and only had been bad.' [1]

'This surely is the nicest. They're all very good. But I didn't know you had an uncle in Chippewa, Tom. I thought all your uncles were in Scotland.'

Bertie's white face got very red. 'Why, mums,' he reproved her, 'don't you know that's his play uncle?'

In spite of Bertie's politeness, it was evident that he was terribly ashamed of his mother's stupid invasion of a child's imaginary world. He took the paper away from her, began reading over the lines about Joe's uncle to himself, his lips moving. Janet and Mrs. Page exchanged glances, and felt very uncomfortable.

'I like the part about the red squirrel,' Bertie said, turning to his friend, and making a beautiful attempt to cover up an awkward situation.

'A red squirrel a-blinkin' and a-rollin' of its eyes,
And a-eatin' of our butter-nuts with funny little sighs.'

Bertie laughed at the picture.

Wee Tom sat immovable in his chair, the only untroubled person in the room; for the moment at least, the perfect example of the reserved Scotchman in miniature.

'Have you written anything else?' Janet asked him, very much excited. Tom was the only infant-prodigy poet she had ever seen with her own eyes.

He shook his head. 'Naw. I wrote all that when I was only a little boy. Not more'n six, I guess. But Bertie likes it.'

No poet surely, either before or after Tom, has been or will

[1] Verses written by John McClure Snook, of Columbus, Ohio, at the age of six.

be so disdainful of his tripping measures.

'But it's so interesting,' Janet persisted. 'You ought to write some more.'

Tom kicked at the rug under his feet. 'I don't want to write any more po'ms,' he declared conclusively, looking up at her through his untidy thatch of hair. One could see that he had already developed unshakable personal convictions. 'Don't think much of such stuff.'

'He's going to be a scientist when he grows up,' explained Bertie. 'Like his father and mother. Look what he brought me for a present. He drew 'em. See this one.' He held out a slip of paper with a huge lizard-like creature, a finny fan rising from it, drawn upon it.

'That's what, Tom?' asked Bertie. 'You didn't write down what this one is.'

'Pelycosaur.' Tom pronounced the word slowly and correctly.

'Here's another. Isn't it funny?' Bertie laughed very hard. 'Dip-lod-o-cus,' he read from his paper. 'And this one's a tyran-no-saurus. Say it for me, mums.'

'I can't pronounce all those names, Bertie. Dear me, does one have to know all that to be a scientist, Tom?'

'That's nothing,' Tom replied. 'There's lots more'n that.'

'All those funny elephants,' Bertie went on. 'Not like the kind they have now. And horses — no bigger'n a dog, Tom says.'

'Where do you find out all this?' Janet inquired.

'In books,' Tom responded curtly. 'You read about it. And all about prehistoric man. The Pithecanthropus — like apes, you know — and the Heidelberg man. It's all in my father's books. He lets me read 'em. If I'm careful. I like it better'n making up po'try. It's more fascinatin'.'

'Of course,' both women agreed.

'An' more useful for being a scientist.'

'Tom 'n I are going off on a long trip together when we're men,' Bertie said. 'To Africa. To see all the animals. Whole herds of elephants. An' lions ——'

'Leopards, panthers, giraffes,' added Tom.

'And kangaroos.'

'That's in Australia. But we're going there too.'

'In a navy cruiser. Tom thinks the navy's better'n the army, mums.'

'You travel more,' Tom said.

'If I was an important officer, they'd give me a cruiser to travel around in.' Tom looked dubious. 'Yes, they would, Tom. If I was a general.'

'I'd rather be an admiral.'

'You're going to be a scientist. They don't get boats to travel in.'

At this Tom hooted, pointed a very dirty finger derisively at his friend. 'They do — they do. To go everywhere. Look at Beebe going to the Sargossa Sea. And the man from the Cleveland Natural History Museum. Oh, boy, I wish I was that man! By the time I'm a scientist, they'll give me an aeroplane.'

'I tell you what let's do, Tom. Go in an army aeroplane. That's it.'

Bertie began to be very much excited. He, a general, Tom, a scientist, flying off to Asia, Australia, Java, India, Samoa. He was not quite well enough for such gigantic imaginings. His mother got Tom downstairs quickly, settled Bertie in his bed, smiled at Janet, who followed Tom's abrupt departure.

In front of the house, Janet met Sylvia Witherspoon. She wore a dull blue coat and hat of the pre-Raphaelite style her mother affected for her. She was not exactly a pretty child. Her face was too pale, her expression too maturely cunning. But in the contrast of her brown eyes, full of dreams, and her long, thin yellow hair spread over her shoulders in the fashion of a child in a Renoir painting, there was indefinable charm.

'Good-afternoon, Mrs. Lamberton,' was Sylvia's correct greeting. 'I'm going in to see Bertie.'

'He's very tired. Mrs. Page just sent Tom McIntosh and me away.'

Sylvia's pointed chin tilted out. 'Mother said I might,' she insisted, going up the steps.

2

Faculty mothers disliked Sylvia. She was forward, they stated, and always up to some kind of trick. At the same time, she was squealing with terror at almost everything she saw or heard, especially trains and dogs. She frightened other children with her tales of horror concerning cyclones, nuns carrying hatchets under their black robes, gypsies stealing children and disguised as ordinary men — looking like any man they might meet on the way to school. Life became full of dread in Sylvia's company. Worst of all, she told lies, lies made up out of whole cloth, with no excuse whatsoever.

After her father's last severe attack of neuritis, she had come to school with her arm in a sling, an empty coat-sleeve dangling pathetically. Her pale face bore the marks of extreme pain.

'What you done to your arm?' the other children immediately demanded.

'It's broken,' she responded in a weak voice.

Her friends crowded round her. No child in their grade had yet had a broken arm. Before it chicken-pox, measles, lice, even diphtheria, those glories of childhood, melted away into nothing.

'Does it hurt much?' they asked.

'Quite a little.' Her face winced.

Until recess Sylvia was the heroine of her grade. But in the playground an older girl, whose brother had experienced the distinction of a broken arm, cast skepticism into the camp of Sylvia's admirers. 'They don't wrap up broken arms like that,' she scoffed. 'They're bandaged tight and with splints.' She explained in detail just how her brother's arm had been managed.

Sylvia's comforters suddenly remembered her past tales of a cruel stepmother.

'She ain't got a stepmother at all,' they whispered together. 'Just a real mother.'

'My mother knows Mrs. Witherspoon,' boasted one.

They also remembered Sylvia's description of a remarkable doll that talked everything, walked, danced even, when her owner played the piano. But even a glimpse of the wonderful doll was refused all who begged hard to see her.

'It was just lies — all about that doll,' they reminded one another. 'Maybe it could say papa and mamma. Nothing else. And I bet it couldn't walk either. Or dance.'

At last they summoned sufficient courage to charge Sylvia with not having a broken arm.

Her wits, however, were equal to the attack. 'It isn't exactly broken. It's neuritis. Just as painful.'

'You said it was broken,' they contended.

'But nobody knows what neuritis is.'

Her friends dropped away. Truly enough, they had never heard of neuritis, and the school dictionary was not a popular or indispensable book with any of them.

When faculty mothers, moved by a sense of duty, reported these lies to Mrs. Witherspoon, she was greatly amused. She was proud of Sylvia's lies.

'The child bears the marks of a literary temperament. I'm sure she will be a novelist. It takes several generations to produce one, you know. And with both Mr. Witherspoon and me interested in writing, it's inevitable that Sylvia should inherit a marked tendency that way.'

Mrs. Witherspoon's numerous social engagements often prevented her from giving Sylvia a proper midday meal, and the child bought cream puffs and candy at a store near the school with the money her mother gave her for luncheon. She was a pasty-looking girl, who appeared undernourished. But then none of the Witherspoons seemed healthy. One could imagine them subsisting on tea, sandwiches, and cake more largely than on beef and potatoes.

Sylvia was not an ordinary child. She never read children's books. At the age of ten D. H. Lawrence was her

favorite writer. 'Women in Love' and 'The White Peacock' were his best novels in her opinion. 'Sons and Lovers'—the love-story part had something to say for itself. Sylvia thought, talked much about love and marriage. Passion, that mystic word. She consulted older girls at school about the eternal mysteries, but they only laughed and got out of her way, then went on whispering about the secrets she longed to know. She had to content herself with love affairs with girls in her class, talked fervently about loving them forever one week, turned to a new love the next.

She was one of Bertie Page's favorite visitors. She told him fairy tales about princesses in gold palaces, princes wandering about in a magic wood, related marvels taking place under the sea. This child, who had never seen the ocean, could describe its writhing storms, the beautiful forests of seaweed, the shells full of strange life, the colored fish, the battles for existence in those green wastes of water.

Sylvia knew Bertie wanted to see her. So when Mrs. Lamberton put on grown-up airs, she shut her teeth tight together, and walked right into the house. A queer child, reflected Janet, walking homeward. There were so many queer faculty children. Professors seemed to breed eccentricity and often brains.

3

Parenthood was a terrible business. Why did any one want children? With Mrs. Page, it had been pathetic, tragic. And yet Janet knew that her friend, soothing Bertie with her magical voice and soft hands, would have changed places with no other human being. It was inexplicable, that deathless bond between parent and child. Husband and wife, for all its closeness, was not the same. More critical, more ephemeral, more easily loosened by time and chance.

Janet sought out Mrs. McIntosh in her laboratory, surrounded by her knives, bottles, drawings, raw flesh.

'You've got a wonderful child, Dolly McIntosh,' she began.

Mrs. McIntosh's eyes took on a deep lustre. They were

like black pansies.

'Wee Tom?'

'I saw him the other day visiting Bertie Page.'

'You saw my well-behaved son then. Bertie brings out the gentler side in him. There's an intellectual affinity between those two. Funny, isn't it? Both of them just eight.'

'I saw some of his verses.'

'He was six when he wrote most of them. One summer on the farm he got started. He'd say them over to himself, and made me take them down.'

'He insists he's going to be a scientist, not a poet.' Janet laughed.

'Yes, and he will be. A poetic scientist. He's got an emotional streak in him both Thomas and I lack. He gets it from my father, a Scotch Presbyterian minister, who wrestled with Hell. Wee Tom is like him — loves and hates. A violent child. Have I told you about his roosters? — Sit down, do.' She pulled up a stool. 'I'm tired to-day. It's restful to talk with some one. There are two of them — scrappy creatures he keeps in the basement now it's cold weather. Potato and Jesus he's named them. Shades of my dear departed father! If he knew! But Tom loves those roosters. The other day he came upstairs from the basement. His hair was all blood — his face cut up. He'd been playing with Potato. He's a rough lad sometimes. And the bird struck at him. Flew right into his face. Instead of running, Tom stuck to the fight. They had it to a finish. Tom wouldn't let a rooster beat him. He almost lost his eye. And when the battle was over, poor Tom cried like a baby. Nerves. And he was afraid he'd hurt Potato. That's Tom. No sense. Now James — he's all sense. Good, ordinary sense. I tell Thomas, James will support us in our old age. But Tom's the genius in the family.'

'There aren't many women who have the distinction of producing genius.'

Mrs. McIntosh sat bent over her laboratory table, her hands holding her head. 'It's a wearisome business — pro-

ducing anything. Children of one's brain — of one's body — the two always fighting against each other. One as dear as the other. I'm not one of these mothers that can give up her work for her children. We didn't count on children, Thomas and I. Just our work. But these two came our first ardent years. And after they came ——' She sighed.

Mrs. McIntosh was franker than most American women. She never covered up the truth with sentimental evasions, with hypocrisy. She didn't pretend that her children came before everything else. Perhaps, if the truth were known, it was her handsome Thomas who did; before children, before experiments, everything. Their partnership wasn't the result of intellectual calculation alone. The plain wife of a distinguished-looking husband has her moments of unseemly pride. Dolly McIntosh and her dear Thomas — they were a remarkable pair. But not equal to Wee Tom. He was an accident, a divine accident, all their experiments in inheritance and environment couldn't entirely explain. Bertie Page, with his charm and active brain, wasn't his equal. No one was. That fierce, independent — that isolated little spirit! How could his mother take him with such calm?

He disturbed one in an uncomfortable way. Sitting on the high laboratory stool beside drooping Dolly McIntosh, Janet suddenly hated Dolly for being the mother of Wee Tom. If she had a child like that, she would be a reverent, tender mother. But did such a child need reverence and tenderness? Possibly indifference, even a little neglect, was better.

There was this tangle of motherhood to settle. Some day, when she and Keith were less firmly stuck in the mud of their poverty, they must decide whether they wanted to be parents. At times she shrank from the task. A husband like Keith was enough. But Keith, who instinctively drew children around him, what did he want? She didn't know. His children would love him better than her. He had more of the child in him, the perennial, immortal boy, playing with life, never disillusioned by it. He would be like that always. But a child in their home — mixed up with engrossing scholarship

and poverty ——

Janet looked up, caught a mocking glance from Mrs. McIntosh's laughing eyes.

'You deciding whether you ought to have a baby, my dear? We all do that the first year. But don't decide anything. That's my advice to you. Babies will come without too much decision. And always too soon.' She straightened up, shook off her weariness. 'Here comes Thomas.' She smiled toward the tall man coming in the door, became once more the right kind of wife for an overworked scientist husband.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRAGIC VISITOR

1

From the day that Janet had visited Keith's class she had fixed her mind upon getting his book done. No longer did she waste time examining the contents of the trunk in her bedroom. Her book could wait. Keith's must come first. Of its importance Professor Desfontaines had made her surer than ever. Every day she spent hours in the study converting more of the scribbled notes into clear type, adding more cards to the steel casket. Her housekeeping was crowded into odd minutes. She stopped work only to give a bridge party which included the wives of the men invited to meet the French scholar — one must be tactful living in a university community, Dolly McIntosh's opinion notwithstanding — and to drink tea every week with her friends, whom Anna now called the 'Better Halves of Wisdom.'

Evelyn Spencer seldom came. She explained that she wanted nothing but sleep on the blessed afternoons without matinees.

'I'm afraid she's getting tired,' Anna said. 'It's time she stopped dancing. But she'll keep on as long as they'll have her.'

'No worse than the washtub,' Lily stated. 'My mother was doing the family washing a few hours before I arrived.'

All through the spring Janet also made frequent visits to Mrs. Page and Bertie, who by April had been fitted into his new shoe and was walking a few steps every day without braces. Now that his operation proved to be successful beyond his parent's hopes, he was full of the plans he and Tom

were making for the day when he could run around like the rest of the boys.

Mrs. Page, Janet's favorite among the older women at Chippewa, gave out a warmth of affection to the few people she loved. Going to this friend made Janet feel that she was returning to her childhood home after a long absence, about to see the mother who had died when she was still in college.

It was Mrs. Page who interested her in gardening. As soon as the frost was out of the ground, she began digging, watched daily for the first shoot of green, exulted over the procession of crocuses, narcissi, tulips in her flower borders. She had set out rosebushes, bought in a funny German store across the river famous for its toys at Christmas time and its cheap rose plants. The proprietor assured her the dead-looking sticks would bloom in June. Already they had turned green, shot out leaves, revealed small knobs which promised buds. She and Mrs. Page, who had the same varieties, compared their shrubs, and watched the changes day by day.

Keith had none of these distractions. Whenever he was free from lectures and students, he was working hard on his book. Reading — thinking — he seemed to care for nothing else in life.

When the University appointments were made late in April, Pierce received an increase in salary appreciably larger than the one granted Keith the preceding year. This time Keith got nothing. Janet had to listen once more to Mary's stormy resentment. She was very calm. What Professor Masters or any one else thought of Keith didn't matter now. With her help he would finish his book much sooner than he had planned. Then they would see what he was worth.

Pierce, wearing a pale grey suit he had bullied a Saint Anthony tailor into giving the air of London, was making plans to spend the summer in the British Isles. He would return with a trunkful of English clothes, looking handsomer than ever.

'I wish we could go for one of our long walks in Mendota Park this afternoon,' Janet suggested to Keith at breakfast a

morning in early May. 'It's too perfect for you to be working inside.'

He looked out into the glaring sunshine. 'Perhaps tomorrow we can.'

'That's what you always say,' she reminded him, 'and spring will soon be gone. I'm going to celebrate this heavenly day somehow. We'll have asparagus and strawberries for dinner.' She jumped up from her chair and perched airily on the arm of his. 'What say you, worthy sage? They're still expensive, but absolutely irresistible. I can't hold out any longer.'

There was a ring at the door. 'Who's coming this early?' Keith speculated, starting down the hall.

Janet listened. Suddenly there was an unearthly shriek. She got up from the table and ran down the hall.

Dr. Spencer was leaning against the wall, Keith supporting him. At the sight, something within her stopped, then began whirling round and round.

'Come — come — sit down in here,' Keith said, trying to get him into the living-room.

Janet opened the door and attempted to help Spencer into a chair. But he waved them both aside. His hands he stretched out in front of him, like a blind man feeling his way.

He struggled to speak. 'She — she's dead — died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital!' he cried out.

He shook all over, almost fell to the floor. Again they labored to make him sit down, but he glared at them with his blood-shot eyes.

'Quick — my God — help me to get money!' he gasped.

Janet was terrified. His red beard, grey face, and tumbled hair gave him the look of a man suddenly gone mad.

'Yes — yes, my boy,' Keith assured him. 'Just a minute.'

'My girl — I killed her.' The half-crazed husband swayed back and forth. 'Dancing down there last night even — for my sake. All for me — me. I thinking only of my work — and she ——' His voice rose to a shout. 'I — I murdered

her!' Once more that same piercing cry. 'All for money — no money.' He dropped back into the chair behind him and covered his face with his hands. 'Help me — O God — ,' he repeated in a whisper of a prayer.

Keith bent over him. 'We'll get together all we can.'

Keith got out his bill-case, emptied it, felt in his pockets. He hadn't much. Janet rushed upstairs. Anything to get away from that face. As she pounded breathlessly up the stairs, it followed her. She knocked at Pierce's door. By some miracle he was there.

Mary came down from her attic. 'What is it, Janet? Let me help, too.'

Downstairs Keith was still bent over the figure huddled in the chair. He was talking quietly. 'Yes, I know. You mustn't think of that now. You did the best you could. We all know that. Try to be calm. Here — here's plenty of money.' He turned to Janet. 'He's taking the first train East — to her old home.'

'You'll go with him to the train?' she whispered.

Spencer dropped his hands from his face. 'No!' he shouted. 'No one. Only her and me.' He began to cry in great sobs.

'Yes — yes,' Keith assured him. 'I respect your wish to be alone.'

He led him to the door, held his hand. 'Later — if we can do anything.' He helped him down the steps and watched him as he stumbled away.

'Can't you follow him?' Janet begged. 'So he won't see you. I'm afraid to have him go alone. He'll get run over — lose his money ——'

'He'll be all right. He must be alone. I'll go and tell Page.'

When Keith was gone, Janet stared out of the window. A cold horror swept over her. That ghastly face — she had never seen any one like that before. His cry still rang in her ears. She couldn't stay here by herself. She'd run up to Mary. At that moment Mary slammed the front door and hurried off to a class.

Janet went into the dining-room to carry the breakfast

dishes out to the kitchen. She must keep doing something. But her hands trembled so that she was in danger of dropping the china. The image of Evelyn Spencer in her red dress, her curls, those slender, dancing legs —— Somehow one couldn't adept the reality of death for such a person. Had the baby come? Was it dead? What had happened those last hours? Dancing last night he said. And then early this morning ——

Why had Keith let him go off alone? Reeling along the sidewalk. If she could run after him — do something!

She couldn't stay in the house. It was too terrifying. She'd do the marketing. She shuddered as she passed through the front door.

Outside the same blue sky and brilliant sun. The elms spread out in fans of cool yellow-green. The robins chirped from the horny boughs of the campus oaks showing their first tips of leaves. Over and over again the hard mocking notes were repeated. She passed the Grecian pillars of the Library and the chattering groups of undergraduates sprawled over the steps, passed the yards full of blooming lilacs and bridal-wreath. Everywhere people were talking, laughing. Their laughter cut at one's heart. Children were playing in the street. And in the midst of it all, death, the death of a young person.

Outside the grocery store a fat baby in his carriage, gurgling with content, smiled at her. She hated him — hated all babies. Mary was right about marriage. Only the life of the virgin was peaceful, simple. Wifehood, motherhood, all that tangled one up in the sorrows of the world.

In the grocery store women were bargaining, thinking about food. The clerk held out a box of strawberries, tipped the shiny red fruit out in his hands, tempted a customer. The vegetables — so alive — giving out delightful odors. Green, yellow, purple, red — how beautiful they were! All those growing things fresh from the earth. 'Yes, madame, fresh to-day, very fancy.' Buying, selling in the midst of death. Why was it that people ate, drank, loved, lived so hard,

only to die, young people like Evelyn Spencer? Full of the love of life they paused, dropped down, and everything was over.

With her market-basket loaded with asparagus and strawberries, giving out their penetrating sweetness underneath their wrappings, Janet started homeward. Only that morning she had been free of care, had thought only of the sunshine and the blue sky, the stirring breeze.

At the corner near home, she met Anna Montgomery. 'Have you seen him?' she gasped. 'Billy Spencer? I'm so scared. He walked right into the house. I was all alone. He says he's going to kill President Taylor — Professor Page. Then he ran off ——' Anna clung to her friend's arm. 'I'm afraid to be alone.'

'Yes, he was here. After money. He must have gone straight to your house afterward.'

'He says those men murdered Evelyn — that he must have revenge. Oh, it's too terrible!'

They went into the house together. A few minutes later, Mrs. Page arrived. 'I didn't even know there was going to be a baby,' she began. 'This has come as such a shock to Herbert and me. I'd heard about her going back on the stage —— But her reasons — I might have helped. But all this year it's been just Bertie with us.'

'I don't see how it could be any other way,' Janet said to comfort her.

'I tried a little at first — asked them to dinner — twice, I think. And they couldn't come. I'd heard about her going to fraternity dances with the boys — thought they didn't care for two old people like Herbert and me.'

They were interrupted by the telephone. Mrs. Field was saying, 'You don't know where he's gone? How strange! Or how it happened?'

Mary reported that the campus hummed with sensational rumors concerning Mrs. Spencer's death.

'Of course,' she declared in her positive way, 'young Spencer had no business getting married. There ought to be laws

against such people rushing into matrimony. At least against their having a baby.'

'If it were only as simple as that!' Janet said.

The next day Mrs. Atkins called. 'Mr. Atkins and I went there the moment we heard,' she announced. 'But no one was there. And no one I've talked to seems to know anything about it.'

Janet started every time the telephone or the doorbell rang. She warned Keith that she was going to run away if any more people asked her questions.

'I just can't stand it,' she said, bursting into tears.

2

As the days passed without any word, rumor fed on Spencer's abrupt disappearance, the lack of all definite information, of the usual conventional accompaniments of death. Gossip reported that the crazed husband hadn't given his wife a decent Christian burial — not even a prayer. Mrs. Porter was greatly agitated.

Faculty circles were stirred by the tragic event as they had been by nothing else in years. Tongues were unloosed; pretences cast aside. It was as if the scared animals hidden away in their holes in the forest had suddenly crept out and faced one another without cringing for the first time.

Those poor young Spencers! The same thing over and over again. Poverty — all of it a question of poverty, the women said. If that poor creature could have stayed quietly at home and taken care of herself —— Wives whose financial struggles were far behind them related the stern economy of the years when their husbands were instructors at Chippewa. Washing, scrubbing the kitchen floor late at night when a sick baby was asleep —— A stranger to Janet lingered in front of the house one evening to tell how she didn't even have a rolling-pin when she was first married — used a milk bottle for years. Every penny counted. No makeshift too small.

Inevitable hardships in all the lower University ranks unless the wives could make money. There was Mrs. Spooner,

who sold life insurance and had paid for her home with her earnings. She heckled every new instructor. She pounced upon her husband's students before the ink on their diplomas was dry, some of them complained, to get her share of their first month's salary check before it was drawn. Mrs. Spooner was the campus pestilence. One ran for cover at sight of her.

Mrs. Henry, too, was a financial asset to her husband. She was ladies' teller in the Second National Bank, a capable, brisk business woman who hired a middle-aged housekeeper to look after her three children. But the Henry children always went to their father's office directly from school, threw themselves noisily upon him, pulled down his books, scribbled on the departmental stationery. He generally ended by taking them for a walk or basketball in the back yard. He never got promoted because he produced nothing. Yet he was an able man, his superiors said. Once they had expected great things of him.

Not many women had Mrs. Hanson's easy way of making money. Few could leave their homes. Most had no resource but the renting of rooms. With the sororities and fraternities skimming the cream off from the undergraduate mass, one had to rent rooms cheap. The girls had callers late in the parlor, and turned the bathroom into a laundry. The boys threw chairs around and didn't pay their rent. One felt degraded dunning them perpetually. Poor Mrs. Carleton had gone through all that horror. And she such a lady! She confessed, herself, with a wry smile the tactics she had been driven to.

'Mr. Jones, could you write me a check for your room rent? I have a bill I must pay. The man is waiting downstairs.'

She left polite little notes: 'My dear Mr. Jones, would you be so kind as to leave your check with me as you go downstairs this noon.' But such hints were later found in the wastepaper basket twisted into a tight little ball.

Now when her roomers got letters from home, possibly containing checks, she shamelessly knocked on the door, en-

tered, and did not leave until she had collected what was rightfully hers.

'It's humiliating,' she concluded. 'If ten years ago I could have looked ahead to see what was before me ——'

'What would you have done?' Janet asked eagerly.

Mrs. Carleton sighed. 'The same thing all over again, I suppose. It was my destiny.'

The men talked, as well as the women, but they kept the discussion on a strictly impersonal plane.

Some of the professors, especially the executives who had years ago been driven to sacrifice softness for efficiency, approved the action of universities which barred married instructors from their staff. A man couldn't support a wife on such salaries. One might as well face the facts. Others inquired why a man between twenty-five and thirty-five — in the larger universities men close to forty were still instructors — should be doomed to single life? The monastic ideal of a celibate scholar belonged to the Middle Ages. If a man chose the intellectual life — and there were few enough in this commercial age who did — Why should he be penalized for it? The day had passed when the sons of wealthy men lacking a taste for business perferred teaching to the Church and could afford to decorate the profession with a minimum of pay. Nowadays such men either made more money themselves, or lived in Europe most of the time and collected first editions, paintings, crucifixes, or even tea-pots. Meanwhile the universities, regardless of the fact that the intellectual class was recruited more and more from the proletariat, went on paying salaries that were insufficient to support a family.

A man in his prime usually did the work of two people: had to teach in summer school, take evening classes in extension, write textbooks, introductions, hack jobs that kept him from getting at solid accomplishment. All the time a grey-bearded head of a department kept whipping him up, 'Publish — publish.' And instead of retorting that his two lively boys wore out shoes at the rate of a pair a month, he slunk away, head down, and probably that night was as cross as a

bear to the tumbling boys growing up more expensive every year and keeping their father in harness.

The waters of academic life, hitherto kept looking decently calm on the surface, were churned to muddy depths. Pierce complained that the Faculty Club had become an impossible place to enjoy a quiet dinner. Some one was continually introducing unpleasant subjects.

3

At last it was reported that Spencer was back. Keith immediately went to his house. No reply to his ringing of the bell. A colleague passed Spencer on the street, unshaven, looking very strange. Professor Page heard that he had been seen drunk on University Avenue, staggering, reeling. He came directly to Keith. Together they went to the garage. No answer as before.

Keith made repeated visits, always with the same result. He tried the door. It was locked. Again and again he returned. No use. One day he found the door open. Spencer must have gone out, he reasoned. He hadn't taken the trouble to fasten it behind him. He went up the dark stairs, tried the inner door. That, too, was not fastened. Keith paused, uncertain what to do. It was a question of saving Spencer. Unless something desperate was attempted, the man would drink himself to death. A man with a mind like his!

Keith pushed the door open and walked in. For a moment the hot, stagnant atmosphere almost overpowered him. He threw open the windows and breathed reviving fresh spring air.

This terrible place would drive any sane man to liquor. Dust and cobwebs were everywhere. Dirty dishes were stacked in the sink. Decayed remnants of food — the smells made him feel sick. Clothes were thrown on the chairs. The bed was unmade. A red cover lay in a heap on the floor. Shoes were tossed carelessly in the corners. A woman's shoes. A heap of something filmy caught his eye — ballet skirts.

Keith, removing a pair of trousers from a chair, sat down

to wait for Spencer. 'My God!' he said aloud. 'Hell — hell.'

Did people live like this — like dirty animals? Keith covered his face. He had never seen poverty at first hand. Picturesque squalor abroad sometimes. But it had meant nothing to him. Here it was different. Close to the University — Spencer sleeping here — eating — a man destined, Keith was confident, to lead the philosophic thought of his country within the next ten or fifteen years. Such a man in this foul hole!

What was he going to do when Spencer came in? He intruding in a man's home. Pushing himself where he wasn't wanted. But he must save him — get him away from this frightful place.

There were footsteps on the stairs, a hand on the doorknob. Spencer entered the room.

At sight of Keith, he fell back against the door. He wasn't drunk. He would have looked less terrible if he had been.

Keith went over to him. 'I've come to take you home with me, Spencer.' He put his hand on his shoulder. 'Can you come right away?'

Spencer began to sob. He was shaking all over. The sounds he made in trying to speak were meaningless.

Keith half carried him over to the bed. Spencer shook his hand in front of Keith's eyes. He had tried to kill himself. He would yet. He was a coward, afraid to die. But he would — he'd do it——

Keith addressed him quietly. 'You'll come with me, won't you? I'll be back in ten minutes. You'll be ready?'

Spencer began to cry again. Finally he promised he'd go home with Keith. 'I'm afraid to stay here,' he confessed. 'I might — you know——'

Keith called to Janet from the front hall. 'I'm bringing Spencer here,' he explained breathlessly. 'I told him I'd be right back. I must hurry before he gets away.'

'You've seen him? How?'

He had no time to answer her. 'Can you, Janet — stand

having him here? It's the only thing that'll save him. He's been drinking for days. He can hardly talk coherently.'

'Where can we put him?'

'My couch in the study. I thought it all out ——'

'Oh, Keith — your work!'

'After seeing him I can't do any work. So it doesn't matter. A man like him. And almost a wreck. I'll do everything I can. Try to spare you.'

'All right. We'll manage.'

Keith put his arms around her. 'Thanks, darling. I was sure you would.'

When Spencer was ushered into the living-room, Janet tried to smile and speak in a natural tone. She put out her hand, loathing within her at the sight of him.

He raised his eyes to hers. 'I — I've got to tell you,' he choked. 'I can't stay until I do. I've got to tell everybody.'

'That's all right, old man.' Keith put his hand on his shoulder. 'Later, when you feel better.'

Spencer shook his head. He was still gripping Janet's hand. 'I murdered her — her — Evelyn — my wife. When she told me——'

'There — Spencer — sit down — I'm going to get you a glass of milk.'

'When she told me — that there was going to be a child — hers — mine——' He raised his haunted eyes to Janet's. 'It was too late to do anything —doctors do things sometimes if you pay them enough—— But she waited too long, afraid to tell me — knew how I felt. No — no — I must tell you—— Don't stop me—— If I confess it—— Then I can sleep. There was only one way. "We'll turn on the gas," I said. "Both of us. You shouldn't be the only one to suffer. It's my fault, too." But she wouldn't. She said my life was too important — my work. My work —— What could I do with a squalling kid — that one room — thinking out — working out — problems — I am an original philosopher. Not piecing together other men's rags. She said healthy babies didn't cry. She'd keep it quiet some way. But she was scared, poor kid.

And then — after a while — she got used to the idea — said she thought she'd like a baby.'

Keith returned with a glass of milk and some crackers. Spencer drank down the milk in a long gulp. He pushed away the crackers. 'I can't swallow anything. Food sticks in my throat. Just something to drink.'

'Now you'll feel better. We're going to make you lie down.'

But Spencer refused to lie down. 'That dancing,' he went on. 'If that killed her — she kept on — night after night. My God! We didn't have a cent — went on two meals a day some of the time. Books — I had to have them —— Why doesn't a big University like this buy a man books? They buy chemicals — build new buildings —— I had to buy them myself. I couldn't wait. She said it was all right — handed over her money.'

Keith looked like a ghost. Janet slipped out of the room to prepare dinner. He must eat, even if Spencer wouldn't. All through the meal, while she and Keith tried to force down a little food, their guest sat talking, fixing first one, then the other with those fearful eyes of his.

He went all over again what his wife had been to him. Joy — sunshine — play — he had always worked so hard. And she — like a butterfly. He had the sentimentality of the cold man of science straying out of his own little world. When he descended from the aloof realms of thought where his studies carried him and flopped back to a place where grocery bills had to be paid, and cars in the garage below waked him out of troubled sleep, and babies came because two people loved each other — it was in this actual world that he had clung to his Evelyn, a cheap little blonde in the eyes of the faculty wives, but to him the glowing comfort of earth after the chill of his distant spheres.

Listening to him, Janet understood the creative spirit, the original mind, and blessed the fates which had made her a comfortable, prosaic person, without the torture of genius.

4

The house, with Spencer as an occupant, became a place without rest or comfort. Keith attempted to get him to work, helped him carry over his books, established him at his desk. For the present it wasn't safe to let Spencer out of one's sight. Keith held him with talk—talked—talked as only Keith could, throwing out ideas, playing with them as a juggler does with his balls, to Spencer's great delight. When they walked back and forth in the little garden past the border of red and yellow tulips, their voices booming up and down, Janet looking out sometimes had the illusion of a third figure in a short scarlet skirt throwing back her head in laughter. But it was only the May breeze shaking the flowers. At the table Spencer, in his spotted, wrinkled clothes, with soiled handkerchiefs sticking out of his pockets, tossed his thoughts past Janet and over to Keith. Between sentences he ate enormously.

After dinner he dragged Keith into the study for another session of reason. He had made the rounds of the scientists, stood over them in their laboratories, wearied the physicists, the chemists, the biologists, chilly Professor Porter even, with his questions, his contradictions. Now he was exploring the possibilities of Keith's mind to grab what was useful to him. And Keith, ridiculously generous, was pouring out the results of years of work for Spencer to run away with if he chose. Spencer used everything, everybody. Not only ideas, but people. He had taken from his wife — taken the money she earned for his books. Now he was taking from Janet, and she, rebellious but helpless, was giving him what he needed.

There were times when Spencer was plunged, without warning, into the fresh torment of his grief. He would throw himself on the study floor, beat his arms against his breast, and wail like a powerful animal caught in a trap. Then Janet pitied him once more, and did what she could. Sometimes she was more successful than Keith in getting him quiet. Over and over she tried to persuade him that his dear Evelyn had

never been happier than in the last months of her life. She loved to dance. She loved planning for her baby.

'Yes — yes,' he would say after her. Women in the process of creation, she told him, found a joy no man could understand. 'You think so — you really think so?' he would question eagerly. 'She seemed — yes, she seemed very happy.'

What was harder to endure than his grief were his periods of violent invective against Chippewa. He had ceased damning himself. In his weary mind the University had become a kind of demon which was trying to destroy him. Chippewa had almost starved Evelyn and him. It had killed her first. Now it was ready to lay hands on him. From Chippewa he descended to Professor Page. He would follow Janet around the house declaiming against this arch-enemy. 'He offered me the smallest salary they pay here,' he would shout at her. 'What man could live on that, I ask? Beating me down — paying me starvation wages.' When Professor Page called, he refused to see him and muttered a string of oaths at the mention of his name. The tempting dishes Mrs. Page sent over to him, he refused to eat. He had murderous thoughts against everybody and everything except the two friends who had saved him. Any day he might turn on them, too.

'We've got to get him away from here,' Janet warned Keith. 'He'll never become a normal human being until he leaves Chippewa.'

They explained the situation to Professor Page, sparing him nothing. He agreed that an urgent letter must be sent off to his old friend at Johns Hopkins, who had advised his taking Spencer. They must have something for him there.

Meanwhile Janet saw no immediate deliverance from her troublesome guest. As Pierce passed her in the hall one day, dressed in immaculate tennis flannels, swinging his racket, singing a low tune, she stopped him impulsively.

'Pierce — when you are gone this summer — could we use your rooms? For Doctor Spencer. I don't know how long he'll be staying.'

Pierce turned very red. 'I'm sorry, Janet. I'd do anything

for you. But I can't stand that man. He — in my quarters — Why he isn't even clean.'

'Philosophers often aren't,' she answered him.

'That's why I can't like philosophers. But, Janet, why don't you and Keith take my rooms? I'd be delighted if that will help any.'

'It will. We'll move in the moment you close the front door. I'm so eager to get Keith back into his study.'

'It's been beastly. You've been a brick, Janet.'

'Only the handmaid of philosophy.'

'Rather the — the scavenger,' he said, turning back and grinning as he plunged down the piazza steps.

Janet and Keith between them kept Spencer going. He was able to deliver the concluding lectures of the year in his courses and was now taking charge of his final examinations. Professor Page was very grateful for this relief. Pierce's packed trunk stood in the front hall. The University year was almost over. Janet said goodbye first to him, then to Mary, very sad at the prospect of going home this year, for her parents had given up the farm to one of their sons and were living in town. The summers, crowded with hard work in the country, were past. Janet turned to the task of restoring Keith's study to its former clean tranquillity.

5

The bedroom, with bookshelves and tables arranged for the comfort of a guest, was now Spencer's headquarters. With a grand gesture he refused to have any more meals with them.

'I've been altogether too much trouble already,' he said. Then with characteristic candor he added, 'I don't want to be held down to regular meals. When I'm working hard, I eat any time — anywhere.'

At first Janet breathed a sigh of relief. But when she found tin cans in his waste-basket, she was worried.

'He'll poison himself eating out of tin cans,' she told Keith. 'He eats right out of the cans. I'm sure he does. Maybe leaves them open — sitting around.'

'He's probably always done it. It hasn't killed him so far.' Keith was inclined to let Spencer do as he pleased, so long as he wasn't bothered.

Janet tactfully left plates, cups, spoons on the study table, raided his room at intervals to wash up the clutter of dishes, made up parcels of laundry and sent them off, tried to bring a semblance of order and cleanliness into the philosophic life. But it was no use. Spencer turned any place he occupied into litter and confusion.

'I wish you'd ask Mrs. McIntosh and all the rest of the ladies not to bother me with invitations,' he requested Janet. 'They'd keep me from getting any work done.'

When Janet was beginning to stagger under her burden, a letter came from Johns Hopkins to Spencer offering him a research fellowship, with little teaching responsibility. At once he became another man. If he could cast off the Chippewa chains, he would start out once more fresh and strong. Johns Hopkins asked him to come by the first of July if he could. He wanted to take the first train, be off at once. But there were his books to pack, that terrible room over the garage to revisit, the furniture to sell, her things——

At the thought he was again his old weak, trembling self.

'We — we'll help you,' Janet promised. Anything to get him away.

'If I didn't have to see that place again,' he whispered.

Together Janet and Keith went to the room over the garage. They decided to do everything themselves. Mrs. Peterson might start fresh talk in a community which was already beginning to forget the Spencers.

Spencer wanted nothing, nothing but his books. No, nothing of hers. He had left the disposal of his wretched possessions entirely to them.

Keith collected Spencer's books and clothes, while Janet went through Mrs. Spencer's belongings. There was the layette she had begun to make, fine white material, yards of flannel. With Anna's help she had finished two dresses, six dressing-gowns with blue feather-stitching, three petticoats.

One couldn't keep back the tears. Well, the Sunshine Society could use them for some other baby. There were her dresses, so few really. And with them she had made such a brave show.

Keith came over to Janet. 'Tell me. Do many people — University people — live like this? I never thought ——'

'I don't know. Not quite so bad. She didn't know how to manage and he ——'

'I've been thinking so many things ——'

The Jew dealer, from whom the Spencers had bought their furniture, was at the door. Janet had telephoned him the day before. She had explained Mrs. Spencer's death, her husband's abrupt departure.

'Too bad,' he grunted, looking around him with a practiced eye.

'I hope you'll do the best you can,' Janet urged. 'The man's in great need of money.'

The dealer examined each chair, the two tables, the couch, the dishes. A business man who made his living off the tragedies of his patrons couldn't afford to be sentimental.

'Two dollar,' he said, nodding and looking very generous.

'You don't mean for everything?'

'All that paint — no good to me. Bad color — very bad color. Nobody buy chairs that color.'

'Red's very fashionable,' Janet informed him. 'The brightest colors are used in houses now. Black and red — it's a popular combination.'

The Jew's little dark eyes gleamed out of his bush of beard. The lady was joking. That was a way with ladies.

'But I must have more than that. I'll have to try some one else.'

The Jew only smiled. Another joke of the lady's. How patient one has to be, his expression read, in tolerating the playfulness of our customers!

With more humor from Janet and patience from the Jew, the agreement was finally reached that all the furniture would bring ten dollars. He cast possessive eyes on the trunk of

clothes and the shoes in a row on the floor, but Janet shook her head. A few pennies for those dancing slippers — the shabby shoes —— No, she couldn't do that. Better to give them to charity. For the music box and records he generously offered two dollars. A present to his wife. No good for his business.

Late in the afternoon the Sunshine Society sent its wagon for the clothes, and they were free to go home. Keith left the keys with the garage owner downstairs, and paid the balance of the rent. When Janet turned over the twelve dollars to Spencer, he was much disturbed.

'Only that much?'

'Your man didn't like the color of the paint,' Janet explained.

'Damn his cheek! It ought to have doubled the value of his stuff.'

'He didn't look at it that way,' she concluded briefly, turning away. She was too utterly exhausted to say more.

6

Spencer ate a farewell dinner with them, and then paced up and down Keith's study, talking without cessation until it was time to start for his train. His book — his great book filled the last waiting moments.

At the station he embarrassed them with no superfluous expressions of gratitude. He could scarcely wait until his train was announced. He kept jumping up and down, went once, twice to the dispatcher to inquire when it would be in. Not until his train had started would he be free.

At last the train. He hurried ahead, pushed past other travellers, ran down the stairs. But settled in his seat when the time came to say goodbye to his friends, he was painfully agitated. He put his arms around Keith. The end of his youth, his brief married life he was leaving behind in Chippewa. He laid his head on Keith's shoulder and clung to him in a last embrace. It was his wife, not Keith, of whom he was making a final farewell.

They hurried away, leaving him bent over in his seat, fighting for self-control.

Outside Janet felt a sudden emancipation. She, too, like poor Spencer, was free once more, could forget him, have Keith to herself again. They walked through the station and to the street-car in silence.

'Well,' Janet sighed as they stood waiting on the corner. 'I doubt if we hear from him again until his book is published. He'll send us a copy with the author's compliments.'

Keith smiled. 'It will be a memorable book.'

Of course Spencer would never marry again. The philosopher would become famous, first at Johns Hopkins, then among philosophers generally, at last a power among lay readers. But the man — so Janet's thoughts ran as she and Keith rode home in the street-car — would be harassed by scolding landladies and greedy mistresses. In the midst of it all, he might have a stray thought of Chippewa, that beautiful place where he and Evelyn had been so happy together.

As the train moved out of the station, Keith had experienced keen desolation. The exhilaration of these last weeks suddenly went out. He felt himself left behind, and curiously alone. It was hard to understand. Spencer wasn't his friend. As a man he scarcely liked him. But something remote and inscrutable within himself had responded to something curiously its like within Spencer. Two lonely spirits had reached out toward each other. No one else he had ever known had affected him in the same powerful way. An affinity of mind. That was it. Keith stared out at the dreary streets stretching beyond the street-car window. He would miss Spencer. He would always miss him. His was a great mind.

CHAPTER X

SUMMER PAUSE

1

SPENCER was gone. The peace of one's own home at last. Janet was working in her garden. She had lain sleepless for hours the night before, waked suddenly from exhausting dreams. Seeing Spencer off had revived memories of his troubles. Of every one's. For it wasn't just Spencer. He was escaping, possibly to something better. At least there was a chance. And Keith was left behind.

No, she musn't get started on that endless way this morning. Here in the dewy freshness of her garden, she would have a few moments of quiet before she started digging out that filthy hole in her house where Spencer those past weeks had slept, eaten, and thought his great thoughts.

The robins hopped around her as she dug her trowel into the ground. Coming closer and closer, they examined her with their heads cocked on one side, flew farther off, finally perched on the boughs of a near-by oak and scolded her. The butterflies made darting shadows over the grass. The sky was full of clouds, blown about by a fitful breeze. The grass, the syringa bushes, the peonies, the roses were heavy with dew. A perfect summer morning. She bent over her roses, smelled them, rubbed her fingers lightly over their delicate petals, exulted in the perfection of color. A few weeks ago they had been lifeless wood thrust into the ground.

It was queer, she pondered, conscious of the blue sky, glowing sun, and whirling air uniting to form this protecting mantle of beauty for a troubled mortal like herself, how man gets peace from an apparently serene nature which underneath repeats all his struggles. There were the flowers

fighting against weather, pests, poor soil. The last two rosebushes in the row — the Druschke and the Clio — she bent down to examine the names on the wooden sticks — were covered with green lice. In the evening she must shake soapsuds over them with a whiskbroom and wash them off. Mrs. Page held out the hope that with constant watchfulness she might postpone doses of hellebore until the June roses were done blooming. Poor things! Some of the buds were already blighted. Even the oaks — from her garden she could see a magnificent skeleton of a tree that had slowly died. The birds, too, were victims of weather, food, enemies. All wild creatures were. And yet men worshiped Nature, got peace from her, hope.

Something must represent escape from the struggle everywhere. The newspaper she had glanced at during breakfast was crowded with the sickening disorder of a chaotic world, A subway strike in New York. 'TWO MILLION WALK TO WORK!' the headlines shrieked, making of tragedy a kind of mock-holiday. Men imprisoned in tunnels in the earth all day for wages insufficient for their families, men who held in their hands daily the lives of hundreds of thousands. The inevitable strikes and lock-outs in the coalfields every summer. Already they were beginning. Janet had a vivid memory of driving through an Ohio coal town where miners were on strike, deserted except for a few helpless families who peered out at her as she passed by. Rows and rows of uniform shacks on stilts. Even when the mine was running, they would be dreary enough.

In a garden one might temporarily forget reality. But because she was a woman, her household came before the world. She dismissed subway guards and striking miners for the immediate problem of her own troubles. How could she get through this summer? Even with nothing but an unsteady fence — Janet stared at the remnant of Judge Seeley's row of pickets — serving as a feeble barrier against a community from which, at the moment, she desired to run for miles. Oh, the weariness at the prospect of a summer at Chippewa!

Nothing but a sagging fence between her and the same tiresome repetitions of talk, nerves, personal difficulty. Did everybody, she wondered, feel that way about his small corner of the earth?

Chippewa was like everything else. On the outside tranquil, dignified, even beautiful sometimes. And underneath such tragedies. For her as well as for the rest. Three months of Saint Anthony, famous for steady heat day and night. The only alternative held out was her brother Henry's summer home on Lake Erie, with existence divided between extensive golf links and bridge games on the piazza. But even if they could afford the journey, that was no place to take Keith, who must work hard on his book. He had given up teaching in summer school so that he wouldn't be interrupted. That meant no money for vacation afterward.

Every one else was going somewhere. Immediately after Commencement the general exodus had set in. The scientists scurried off to the industrial jobs they said little about. Professor East in geology was spending the summer in Montana in the employ of a big oil company. Professor Willis was in Chicago offering expert advice to soap manufacturers. Professor Witherspoon was giving talks on the novel to Chautauqua audiences in tents. Summer was the golden time for those fortunate men of learning who could commercialize their talents.

Robert Montgomery was going to drive a tractor in the North Dakota harvest-fields. If he were lucky, he might stay through threshing. Until he had to leave on the first of July, he was getting his book ready for the press. It was to be published in the fall. Anna would stay with her parents, who had a lake cottage in northern Wisconsin.

Mr. and Mrs. Henderson had already departed to her father's farm in the southern part of the State.

'I hope I shan't meet anything more intelligent than a cow,' she told Janet the day she said farewell to her wriggling third-grade pupils. 'A place like Chippewa is the most wearing in the world. If I can only keep Peter quiet, I'll be thank-

ful. If I'd let him, he'd talk about the University all summer. I wish he were a big fellow like Mr. Montgomery, so he could work on the farm. It'd take his mind off history.'

Mr. Henderson, with tiny hands resembling bird-claws clasped over his second vest button, like photographs of the poet Swinburne, had not been fashioned for agricultural labor. He hated the idea of wasting time in the country. Saying good-bye to Keith and Janet, he hinted that he was being dragged off against his will.

John Slater had finally decided to go to Russia on the money his wife had earned in the registrar's office. His book on the coöperative movement could otherwise not be written. Clara seemed very passive about Russia. But since John said he had to go, there was no help for it.

Slater dropped in daily to consult with Keith, who had once studied Russian.

'I wish we were going to Russia this summer,' Keith had said, not escaping envy for such romantic adventure in the cause of scholarship. 'I'm beastly bored with the eighteenth century.'

Janet, suffering the same restlessness, had promptly lost her temper. 'You'd be more bored teaching summer school,' she retorted hotly. 'That's what most men are doing.' Then she left him quickly before she gave way to tears.

She had been very angry. Keith didn't appreciate the struggle she had made to give him a free summer. At first she had wondered how they could manage. But after Professor Desfontaine's visit, she had resolutely decreed no summer school. Her garden would provide all the fresh vegetables. If the worst came to pass, they'd turn vegetarian. For weeks she had juggled figures to study out how they could survive three idle months. And then in the end, Keith talked about Russia.

Her wrath had long since passed. A temporary flash, followed by a return of reason. She must be fair with Keith. She had taken upon herself their financial responsibilities to

free him from worry. He didn't know how pinched they were. He must give his mind to his book.

Keith was working in his study this brisk June morning. Poor boy, he had lost weeks of valuable time looking after Spencer. Now he must make it up, he said, smiling at her across the breakfast table and making no complaint concerning their troublesome guest.

With difficulty she had smiled back. If she could only go on thinking that the book would make any difference. That was the trouble. She had doubts about anything Keith might do at Chippewa. Last night, for the first time, she realized that she had been nourishing vain hopes. Keith would never make a name for himself in Chippewa. He didn't belong here any more than Spencer had. Where did he belong? Where did all exceptional men belong? That was the stupendous problem. They didn't fit in anywhere.

Janet gritted her teeth as she pushed her trowel deep into the sweet-smelling earth. Spencer had got away. Page had helped him. People always would help him. Keith they would leave to himself, consider above the need of their aid. And yet Keith, delicate, fine and proud, needed help more than Spencer, whose crude strength lifted him out of his difficulties.

She saw this clearly. For Janet had the seeing eye. Inferior as she judged herself to her husband, she felt sure she perceived what would never be clear to him — the danger of his staying on in this place. He must get away. She must get him away. The idea had beat hard upon her through the long hours of a sleepless night.

Keith ought to go back to Harvard. His book —— It was what a scholar published which spread his name beyond his own university. If the men who had taught Keith saw what he had done ——

But all his schemes were colossal, unending. The book that he wanted to write would take years — years. Meanwhile what would happen? If she could convert him to something smaller, within reasonable compass, which he could

finish in a year. Let the big work wait a little. Two or three years — what did that matter? If she could get him started this summer ——

She must try. She mustn't think of the difficulties. Keith would write his book. She would help him to do it. He wouldn't guess that she was guiding him. How astute, how very adroit she must be! Even if it wasn't the momentous book he now dreamed of writing, it would be compelling, wise, show Harvard what a remarkable scholar her husband was. He was too good for Chippewa. But somewhere else ——

She must go upstairs now and clean the bedroom. No more dawdling.

2

Keith sat in his study staring at the confusion of books and papers on his desk. With the end of the year had come great weariness. He could do nothing. He sighed. Was all this painful effort worth making? Why did men set themselves such impossible tasks? The lines of a poem of Yeats drifted into his mind as he glanced out toward Janet's garden:

'Before I am old
I shall have written him one
Poem maybe as cold
And passionate as the dawn.'

Young men had yearnings like that. He and Spencer had talked again and again of that quenchless desire to labor without pay, without sight of the end, in the pursuit of some remote idea, vision of beauty, cause, religion. His glance returned to the rows and rows of books on the shelves. The immortal names of unhappy men. A few tireless minds, goaded on by hopes and dreams which among ordinary men are but madness and silly idealism.

The world had common-sense on its side. The men like Spencer and him were fools. They gave years and strength in trying to do what might in the end result in nothing. But

it was no use. They were like that. They must go on. It was attempting something big which mattered. Spencer in Baltimore, he here, fighting out their giant projects.

During the summer vacation Keith had set himself the task of relating eighteenth-century England to France, which he knew fairly well now, and to Italy and Germany, familiar only in their broader aspects. It was a job for two or three men to collaborate on, Spencer thought, and Keith agreed. But since there were no collaborators, he must go on alone.

Germany first, that mixture of barbarism, Mediævalism, science, religion, music, poetry. It was a difficult country to understand. The war had resulted in a generation of young men tragically ignorant of this fascinating and contradictory nation. All this must be overcome. A fleeting summer to get started. A good German history first. Then he must piece together what he already knew and begin to fill the gaps.

He brought down his Ranke from his shelves. He must hunt up the historians and the German department to get in touch with contemporary scholarship. Lamentable ignorance. He shook his head. How much to be learned in one short life!

But this morning he was too tired to begin. Spencer's disturbing departure had started his mind on the wrong tack. He would wait for a fresh day.

Janet — where was she? He went out into the hall and called her name. He looked out into the garden. He started upstairs.

'Janet, Janet — where are you?'

He stood in the doorway of their bedroom. Janet, perched on a chair, was examining the closet shelf. She held out something — a tin can.

'They're even up here,' she scolded. 'They're everywhere — no end.'

Keith, jolted rudely from his and Spencer's airy speculations to the material presence of tin cans, stared. 'What are you doing?' he demanded.

'Restoring our bedroom to clean sanity,' she explained.

'But where is Mrs. Peterson?'

'I don't know.' Her voice sounded queer. 'I've got to get at this myself.'

'You're always doing these things when you think I'm busy, Janet.' He became stern. 'I've told you before I wasn't going to have my wife performing such labor. You deceive me.' Keith felt his temper going. 'Very well, then. If you insist upon ——' Words failed him. He picked up an apron lying on a chair and girded it about him. 'I got that man here. I'll clean up what he didn't take with him.'

Janet attempted some protest, but he paid no attention. 'I wonder,' he speculated, as he stood ready to carry out the first load of cans, 'whether Spencer ever helped his wife. Or was she always cleaning up such abominable messes after him?' Keith examined the smeary room with the furious disgust of a thorough housewife.

For the next few days he insisted upon helping with a belated spring house-cleaning. He scrubbed floors, burned rubbish, washed windows, carried out mattresses. He was worth two or three Mrs. Petersons. For a person of such complete inexperience he was remarkable. He ate tremendously, and although he developed a suspicious limp in a day or two and began talking about his bed immediately after dinner, his enthusiasm for domestic labor was unabating. He was tired of books. This kind of vacation was just what he needed. Hereafter he would do his share of the housework. Surely this hard-and-fast division of labor between male and female was foolish. Janet must admit that he had capacities she had never suspected.

Then he went back to his study. He began to re-read Goethe's 'Dichtung and Wahrheit.' It was years since he had read this wonderful book, the record of the development of a mind both creative and critical. The alternation of barren despair and feverish activity made an enthralling story. He forgot that he intended to wash the luncheon dishes, the dinner dishes. Back to his absorbing book. What a marvel it was, that union of something mysterious within

one's self with a great mind of the past. Goethe helped to make so much clear. The best of eighteenth-century Germany was in that book. Lightly Keith's creative faculty began to build up a new picture, ethereal as a cloud at first, or even a swift dream.

He came to dinner, bringing himself back to the sphere of bread and dishes with conscious effort.

'How tired you look, dear!' Janet was saying.

He passed his hand over his face. 'I? Oh, no.'

'Have you been writing something?'

'Writing? No — not writing.' He found it difficult to explain what he had been doing.

'Don't you think it would be a good idea,' she suggested, 'to take off this summer when you aren't interrupted with classes and begin to write? There's that chapter you finished on the general state of cultural England in 1688. That would be a splendid beginning. Then follow it up in the large aspects of your subject. Not even refer to your notes. Write from memory general chapters — the big ideas, tendencies, and all that. Write it up very simply. Like lectures for your students.'

Keith stared at her. 'Why should I do that?'

'To get the outlines clear in your own mind, you know. There's so much confusion of detail.'

'But why this idea of writing for my students?' Keith insisted. 'I don't want to write for them.'

The idea was amusing. He laughed heartily. 'I'm writing a book for mature men, not for children,' he went on.

But there was something in what Janet said, he deliberated, making a circle of bread crumbs around his plate. Her suggestions were sensible always. Before he attempted a synthesis of European culture — an undertaking for years, but he was driven into it — he ought to write out his general picture of English civilization. Not a bad idea at all.

'Getting something down on paper is a good beginning,' he agreed politely. 'And writing will be a change, a rest. I'd like to see how my tentative critical point of view looks when

it's spread out in your clear typewritten pages,' he continued, warming up to a new project. 'That is, if it wouldn't be too much trouble for you, dear.'

'But I want to help,' she interrupted fervently. 'I'll move the typewriter into this room. Use the big table.'

'As an experiment, I might even explain myself to the immature. Make a game of it. As a change from more important labor.'

Keith liked playing games. Not tennis, golf, bridge, but games of the mind. He was always playing a new one. Well, here it was, a fresh variety.

'I'll start to-morrow,' he promised, beginning to eat his dinner.

3

Summer Session had begun. Slater had started for Russia. His wife was taking care of the rush of registration. Professors were back at work once more. They hated to teach in summer school, but there was no escape. Summer Session wasn't long. Just six weeks. And as careful wives explained, it made the family budget come out even.

'Back at the old school,' called out Professor Atkins in a voice almost too jaunty. He hadn't missed a summer in twenty years, a shining example to less patient husbands.

Every morning Janet watched the procession of students past the house. The majority were women, school teachers trying to give themselves an extra rub of information. Some of them looked as if they ought to be resting in the country.

Lily Colfax, that resourceful woman, had found a new way to earn money while Harold was away with the Geological Survey in the northern part of the State. She had collected the teachers from her native county who were attending Summer School, found near-by rooms for those she couldn't accommodate in her own house, and furnished meals for the entire company. When Keith and Janet, in their leisurely strolls around the campus after dinner, passed Lily's

house, the piazza was crowded. Lily's talk flowed gaily out toward the street.

'They're ideal boarders,' she reported to Janet. 'They're quiet and don't eat much.'

Lily accompanied the school teachers on educational tours of the flour mills, the Capitol Building, the State Prison, a model institution, Lily explained, and the slaughter yards. She also attended lectures by visiting authors.

'I'm having a wonderful summer,' she boasted. 'I let Harold know it, too. He isn't going to have all the fun.'

Clara Slater was less successful in filling the void left by her husband's absence. The night Janet asked her to dinner, Keith kept bobbing around the subject of Russia all through the meal. Clara was surprisingly apathetic. She didn't seem to know what John was doing in Russia or exactly where he was.

'All those queer names,' she apologized. 'And most of them changed since I went to school. It's hard to keep track.'

Keith, who had anticipated the ferment of Russia to seethe second-hand in Clara's glowing words, was disappointed.

'She's very tired,' Janet explained. 'As tired as an old shoe.'

'She's not an exciting woman. At least not about Russia,' he added with his invariable politeness.

The McIntoshes, kept in town later than usual by their experiments, had bribed their sons into acquiescence by a present of roller skates. James and Thomas crashed along the campus sidewalks morning, noon, and night. They had observed Professor Field on his rounds and made him their roller-skating hero.

'Gee, but I wish I could fly along like him,' sighed Wee Tom to Keith. 'Ain't he grand?'

'Why don't you start a race with him?' Keith suggested. The ideal life, he speculated, as a race after something never quite attainable. A valuable lesson for boys to learn while still young.

Wee Tom, who admired Keith, one couldn't decide quite

why, immediately started after the invincible Professor Field. He, unconscious of competition, plunged far ahead with the speed of years of practice.

The McIntosh boys wouldn't give up. They worked hard to shorten the distance between them and the great Chippewa roller-skater, but in vain. Always that tall, thin figure, with the dark beard sailing out, far beyond them. At last he must have become aware of the boys tumbling after him. His speed slackened. They got very close. Then he let out more speed. Again and again that tantalizing approach. Almost up to him — and then defeat once more.

Keith stood out on the piazza steps to watch them, then returned to work. He and the boys in the same mad game.

For three days Keith had been writing a chapter on the English gentleman, evidently an entertaining occupation, since chuckles and bursts of laughter crept through the study door. Janet kept out of sight until the scion of blood and wealth, followed through childhood, school, the grand tour, and city and country life, lay in the parish church under a stone effigy, with a marble tablet on the wall extolling his virtues.

'Janet! Janet!' called Keith, 'I've got something to read you.'

Janet, seated in front of his desk, with folded hands, listened like a good little school-girl. Keith's gentleman was not unlike Anatole France's D'Anquetil, — not at all the cultured scholar, connoisseur, sportsman of romantic tradition.

'Yes,' Keith concluded, looking up at his audience, 'it is easy enough to be simple and amusing if one chooses.'

The rest of the day he devoted to German history. Writing went well enough as a morning pastime and was clearing up some of the big ideas.

After dinner he went out to play with the little Chamberlain girls, who hovered around the back door and asked Janet if Mr. Lamberton wasn't coming out soon to chase them. They fell upon him the moment he emerged. Nancy, aged four, and Anne, not yet three, pursued him around the

flower beds, the rosebushes, the trees. Around the house. Almost upon him with their fat little legs. Then he dodged and doubled a few inches ahead. They panted, squealed, tumbled in the grass, then started over again.

After a strenuous game, in which the Dale boy and girl farther down the block had joined, Keith escaped into the house. There was nothing so charming as children, he mused, mopping his face and seating himself at his desk. Spencer said that no man of original mind could afford to be a father. It sounded unnatural, yet it was true. Poor Evelyn couldn't understand that. No woman could. A philosopher in the same house with a crying baby was ridiculous. Spencer got very excited on this favorite subject of his.

'Let women of brains have children,' he declared. 'It's their highest destiny — to hand down ability to their sons. But for men like you and me, Lamberton — in the fetters of fatherhood. Take my advice, man.'

Spencer giving advice was at the same time comic and convincing.

And yet children were so appealing. Tom McIntosh, Anne Chamberlain, who clung to him in a queer way, almost uncomfortably sometimes. If children only liked him less. He felt traitorous inside. For if he had his way, there would be no children. The world — he had never told any one what he thought of the world. It was too terrible. But to bring life into it — to go on doing it — century after century — with the same stupid repetitions of folly, inanity, cruelty. A child like Tom McIntosh — his eyes full of wonder at the marvel of the universe — for that boy to find out, as all intelligent human beings must find out too soon ——

He hoped Janet didn't want children. Not even for her. He wasn't like Spencer, who disliked children and found them troublesome. He loved them too much, suffered for them. And to be torn to pieces for his own —— No, he couldn't bear it.

He opened the book he was reading. Schopenhauer. The romantic revolt in Germany against the eighteenth century

had always interested him. He and Spencer had been discussing that black philosopher's biological approach to philosophical questions. Spencer also traced much supposedly twentieth-century discovery back to Schopenhauer. The importance of sex as an explanation of human activity. Spencer was so generous in emptying the best of himself for his friends. Sometimes Keith feared he had taken too much from Spencer.

Janet, coming into the house, passed the study door. Keith did not look up. She went on toward the living-room, and dropped into the nearest chair in the darkness.

Keith was writing every day. At the rate he was going he could finish his book by early spring. That is, if he chose, if his interest held out. But somehow he didn't seem —— There was all that German he was reading these days. Winkelmann, Schopenhauer, Kant, Goethe. Why? she wondered. Off on some zigzag path.

But with her help, he could soon be done. The two laboring together like Mr. and Mrs. McIntosh, who resembled a team of horses which had worked long and faithfully side by side. But what if she couldn't help him? If he insisted upon going by himself? Intellectual coöperation between a husband and wife was, as Mary persistently asserted, a rare spectacle. Janet began to laugh hysterically at the picture of herself and Keith in one harness. It was too ridiculous. She going along gently and steadily — what a stupidly tractable person she was, really — and Keith, rearing, plunging, bolting off into some bypath, swimming streams instead of going over a bridge —— All that German! Her grandfather had owned a horse like Keith. Biddle would never submit to being driven in a team, nor could he be hitched to the lightest runabout. He would kick his shafts to splinters. But to the end he was a wonderful riding horse for any one who could stand his fits of temperament. Always a nose ahead of the other horses, tireless, even gentle, but utterly unreasonable. Dear old Biddle!

Janet stared through the thick shadows around her. If she could only help Keith!

CHAPTER XI

BABIES AND SPIRAL NEBULÆ

1

When Pierce and Mary returned to Saint Anthony in the fall, the Gilkey house next to the Chamberlains had been converted into a nursery school by the new head of the education department, Professor Harris. Janet greeted them with the news that she was chairman of the committee to canvass parents for babies and small children under kindergarten age.

Mary beamed approval. 'I'm delighted to hear that you have something constructive to do. It's a splendid idea, a nursery school. You'll learn how to bring up your own children scientifically.' Mary viewed children in every modern woman's background. 'And you say that they're even contemplating supervised play for older children after school hours?'

Mary foresaw Mrs. Chamberlain, free of her encumbrance of babies, returning to bacteriology, Mrs. Dale to her archæology and her articles. This new school solved everything. Pierce, in a blue and grey homespun fashioned in London, appearing even more elegantly aloof from Chippewa than ever, suggested that the neighborhood would be unbearably cluttered up with children.

Mrs. Harris, in spite of the regulation prohibiting the wives of professors from the faculty, had been appointed temporary head of the school. Masculine in appearance and manner, persistent, good-natured, she immediately impressed every one who met her as a forceful woman, brimming over with ideas. At the opening conference she held with her assistants, she instructed them to give first choice to those in-

fants least corrupted by home influence, preferably fresh from the mother's womb. But of course she accepted all under a year for her infant department. The older ones up to five could wait a little. There were always more than one wanted of that mature variety, the least satisfactory subjects for scientific purposes. When Mrs. Harris paused between sentences, Mrs. Porter said under her breath, 'The little dears, I'd take them any age.' Mrs. Witherspoon had also been attracted to Mrs. Harris's venture. She sought novelty, even in babies. In her earrings — jade they were at the first meeting — and her severe black hat tilted stylishly over her long face, she seemed somewhat exotic for her new duties. Mrs. Henderson, using her free Saturday in the cause of childhood, took down directions in an efficient notebook.

Every afternoon, when Keith did not need her, Janet hunted the neighborhood for babies. She had an impressive introduction composed for her purpose explaining that sturdy babies of the right age would be carefully supervised by trained nurses and educational experts in healthful and quiet surroundings. But before she had got out the first explanatory words, an infant was thrust into her arms. There was embarrassment of riches. Mothers seemed to be waiting for her visit, with a child of the correct age and equipment, dressed and ready. Where she had expected objections, strings of questions, hesitations, there was an almost overeagerness to surrender offspring to science.

Mothers explained that this was just the chance they had been waiting for. In the intellectual atmosphere of a university campus, they had a vague feeling that they ought to be feeding their minds. But with children, there was no time to attend lectures, take courses. They had tried hiring students and found them most unsatisfactory. Mrs. Stockton, mother of a daughter aged six months, told Janet of her experience in getting a student to give Eleanor an airing in her carriage. Half an hour later, when she was making calls in the neighborhood, she discovered the girl sitting on the steps

of the Christian Science Church, and Eleanor quite motionless.

'Why aren't you wheeling Eleanor up and down?' she demanded. — 'I certainly didn't intend to pay that girl for sitting in the sun,' she explained to Janet. 'And she had the impudence to answer back, "Does it make any difference to the baby?" '

For money expended, most Chippewa wives expected its full value in return. Small salaries everywhere teach women that important lesson, but not without blighting their kindlier impulses. Hereafter Mrs. Stockton could hand Eleanor over to Mrs. Harris, and make calls every afternoon.

By the first of October the nursery school was in operation at full capacity. Because Janet was young and agile, she had collected more pupils for it than any other member of the committee.

'You have just the proper balance of energy and tact, Mrs. Lamberton,' Mrs. Harris applauded. 'You've been an invaluable assistant. Now we must get the supervised play going. I leave it all to your generalship. Mrs. Porter wants to help. She's a cumbersome body, but use her if you can.'

Once more Janet made the round of faculty families. This time she collided with Dolly McIntosh.

'So they want to show my boys how to amuse themselves after school hours, do they? Well, they can't have them. You tell Mrs. Harris my children have sufficient initiative to supervise their own play. The idea! My one maternal principle is, "Let children alone!" You tell Mrs. Harris that.'

Janet told Mrs. Harris. She also told Mrs. Porter.

'It's fortunate,' wheezed poor Mrs. Porter, a victim to asthma. 'Every one knows how I love children. After losing one of my own, you know. But those McIntosh boys! The little one — Thomas — he was such a pretty baby — I used to try to be friendly with him. But he was scarcely out of dresses before he was throwing stones at my windows and sticks into my yard. A bad child. Yes, we're better off without him.'

No other mother had Mrs. McIntosh's objection to organized play. Anything to get a rest from the children between school and five o'clock. A good safe place. Some one to bring them home. They examined the gymnastic equipment in the yard and in the spacious rooms, the games, the books, and expressed complete satisfaction.

On her rounds Janet pondered over this universal eagerness mothers showed to get rid of their children. How bored they must be with them! Motherhood in many cases seemed to be nothing but a physical accident. Bearing a child resulted in no mystical transformation of a commonplace woman into a wise and tender parent. Women remained what they were. Nature, in her stupid, messy way, left potential mothers in sterility everywhere. There was Mrs. Henderson. And Mary, whose violent feminism melted when she saw a baby.

Mrs. Chamberlain had her three children in the nursery school between nine and four. The baby throve. Nancy and Anne loved their new life. Even better than a family of three children was one of thirty. The first day they cried when they had to come home. Mrs. Chamberlain told Janet her present freedom was too good to be true. She got out her golf sticks and accompanied her husband to the university links, as in the first companionable months of her marriage. When her mother-in-law arrived on her annual visit, she suffered the initial shock at new ways, and then wholly approved the modern system of wholesale child-raising. From her came the suggestion that Fanny accompany her son on his sabbatical leave next year and work with him in the Vienna laboratory. With the help of the nursery school, she'd manage the children.

'Don't tell any one,' Mrs. Chamberlain warned Janet. 'It's too perfect. Something will come along to spoil it.'

'Don't *let* anything spoil it,' smiled Janet.

'If I only don't get pregnant again. Some women, you know — no matter how careful they are. I'm so nervous about it. I can't tell you. Andrew'd be furious. He's so

enthusiastic about my going with him. He was dreading a year in Vienna alone. But if I —— We've got more children now than he wanted.'

All this from a woman who a few weeks ago had seemed a Cordelia among mothers!

2

Professor Harris, while his wife had been directing the young of pre-school age, had been equally active with the University model school. His predecessor, an elderly man fixed in his ways, had lacked enthusiasm for the latest experiments. Intelligence tests had been used fitfully by a few teachers, not at all by others. This must go. Scientific measurements for all. Children came home from school babbling about I. Q.'s, norms, multi-mental scales. They appeared to like these new brain yardsticks.

Bertie Page raised the only dissenting voice. He was going to school for the first time, and to his joy was in the same room with his friend Thomas. When his teacher started out with a general intelligence test, administered to Bertie by himself, she asked what month it was. Bertie, oblivious to time, carelessly answered 'September.' 'Right,' said the teacher at the instant Bertie remembered the new month of October had begun. Silly old thing! She didn't know the right answer herself. Bertie decided to test her ignorance further. 'Is the world bigger than the sun?' asked the teacher. 'Yes,' said Bertie, determined to get at the bottom of her mind. 'Right,' she said again. It was terrible. She, a teacher, supposed to know something. To all the other questions, easy ones any fool could answer, he gave a mixture of correct or incorrect replies. It didn't matter which. That teacher didn't know anything.

When he told Tom about it, the canny young Scotchman hooted at Bertie: 'Don't you know nothing yourself, Bert? That's the way they do it. The teacher always says "right." But if you answer the wrong things, that goes against you.

You better look out, Bert, or you'll turn out a moron and can't be in my grade.'

Wee Tom caught on to all the new words. Moron — subnormal. That was nothing to him. All his father's students were one or the other. Or the deadly average. That was another of Professor McIntosh's home phrases.

Thomas, whatever private opinion he entertained of mental tests, was determined to do the best he could. He was a clever boy. He knew it. His parents had never tried to conceal the truth from him. If there was anything to all this I. Q. business, he'd be up to the top. He agreed with Bertie that any fool could answer the questions. But he went ahead working like a new steam engine. His record reached such phenomenal heights that his mental age placed him beyond the elementary grades altogether. His teacher appealed to Professor Harris. What could she do with that little McIntosh boy? Only nine years old. Mental age fifteen years, four months.

'Well shove him up a grade,' commanded Professor Harris. 'Two grades. See what happens.'

Then there was that little Page boy. Very low in general intelligence. Extraordinarily high in the other tests. She couldn't explain it. Call on his mother. Enlist her aid.

Mrs. Page immediately explained the situation. She had already reproved Bertie for trying to trap his teacher. He listened politely. He was a sweet child. But soon he'd be up to something else. A delicate child lives by his wits. Bertie triumphed on his.

Sylvia Witherspoon was even worse than Wee Tom or Bertie. She was old enough to know better. All that the test demanded was strict attention to directions, and a level head. Unfortunately for her mental measurement, Sylvia never followed directions, and her mind shot off along strange paths. The test — called the Opposites Test — was foolproof, but not genius-proof. In the first column was the word 'dark,' from which one chose its opposite out of a list of words, all numbered. The correct word was 'light,' and its

number, 3, was to be written in the final column.

This, however, was too simple for the Witherspoon mind. The opposite to dark in her poetical fancy was not 'light,' but 'luminosity.' Into a narrow column measured for a number she wrote this beautiful word. She detested numbers. She also detested the everyday words stupid teachers chose for her. The opposite of 'dull' was not 'sharp.' Dullness to her meant something like a Dottie Dimple or Flaxie Frizzle story which her mother had read as a little girl. Accordingly she wrote in the final column, not 4, signifying 'sharp,' but 'enthralling.' This she crossed out for the more exact word 'absorbing.' The opposite of 'sorry' was not figure 5, meaning 'glad,' but 'beatific,' 'rapturous,' 'blissful.' She finally decided on 'ecstatic,' and got a little behind. The opposite of 'certain' gave her peculiar pleasure. She wasn't entirely sure of its meaning, but it was the most satisfying word in her list. 'Imperspicuitous.' She had seen the word 'imperspicuity' in a book she had read recently, had guessed at its meaning. Her father had taught her how to make adjectives. There it was.

The teacher's eye at once lighted upon Sylvia's paper. She held it up before the class.

'Everything's wrong,' she declared in her harshest voice. 'Sylvia Witherspoon, why don't you ever do what you're told?'

'Read it to them,' urged Sylvia, proud of her handiwork.

The teacher began to look down the list. Her face changed. She looked as if she wanted to laugh.

'I wrote down some lovely words. Aren't they good?'

But the teacher refused to read Sylvia's list to the class. The pupil answering to the name of Sylvia Witherspoon was conceited and ill-mannered enough already. She showed the paper to Professor Harris, who knew the child's mother. A professor of education often has his sense of humor dulled by the demands of his job. But this time he laughed, laughed very hard.

'That woman's own child. Determined to be different.'

Professor Harris shook his head. Professors' children were a nuisance, messing up the best systems of measurement. Picked up all kinds of information at home, accumulated vocabularies far above their mental capacity. He'd have to think of something different. Something they couldn't defeat.

3

Janet concluded her round of visits and dropped in to report the results to Mrs. Porter, who liked to be consulted. She had tried to fill up her time with church work, foreign missions, wasteful little charities, but somehow the days were always too long. She had built such hopes upon the nursery and play schools as means of being useful. But no one wanted her. Mrs. Witherspoon and Mrs. Henderson, she complained, took everything away from her. With best intentions in the world and a sentimental devotion to childhood without the least understanding of children, she had got her share of responsibility into a sorry tangle. Of late she had developed an antagonism to Mrs. Harris's managing ways, threatened to resign, then remembered her vacant life and reconsidered her action, and went muddling along.

'We mustn't antagonize her,' Mrs. Harris warned the members of the committee, regardless of the fact that Mrs. Porter reserved her deadliest enmity for herself. 'Manage her somehow.'

Only Janet could keep her in order.

'Our diplomat,' Mrs. Harris said, beaming upon Janet.

For years Mrs. Porter had been ridiculed by fellow faculty wives as a stupid and superstitious woman. Of late, however, every one was trying to conciliate her. When most people had ceased crediting the hoary tradition of Mrs. Porter's expectation of money, it was reported that she had inherited a considerable fortune. For a long time no one knew what she intended to do with it. At last the truth leaked out that the Porter money had paid for the new Observatory being built out near the Experimental Farm. In the midst of all the

talk about the Spencers the preceding spring, the Regents had accepted Professor and Mrs. Porter's gift to the University of a large reflector, the third largest in the country, as well as the building which was to house it. To the chagrin of those who thought they kept up with events, it developed that Mrs. Porter's inheritance had come five years ago and that during those years she, reputed a garrulous and meddlesome woman, had kept counsel with her husband in plans about the telescope. The President's annual report announced the Porter Observatory as among the most momentous events of Chippewa history.

But Mrs. Porter's gift to science did not make her happy. As soon as the Observatory was complete and the powerful reflector raised into position, Porter seldom left the new building. Night after night he followed the wheeling course of the stars, slept at dawn, snatched food prepared by one of his assistants. His wife at home alone lived in even more complete desolation than before.

'Find something for me to do,' she appealed to Janet. 'I've got so much time on my hands.' She didn't know how it happened. She was always trying to be useful, to do good. And everything — everything slipped out of her reach.

4

The formal ceremony of opening the new observatory took place early in November. On a clear frosty night, a procession of professors and their wives followed the path from the street car, the rounded dome of the building cutting the starry blackness in front of them.

Janet's voice dropped to a whisper. 'If Mrs. Porter could only get some satisfaction from her generosity, Keith. But I fear she won't, poor thing! How beautiful the stars are to-night!' She stood motionless. 'I don't believe I've ever seen so many. It's like those nights up in the North Woods. You remember, dear.' She pressed his arm. 'Lying in our tent looking out.' She pointed toward the western horizon. 'There's Vega. It's like an incandescent arc light, isn't it?

That same bluish white. And over here ——' She faced the east. 'Betelgeuse coming up red over the horizon.'

They paused at the doorway. Jupiter shone directly over them, a mellow flame in the wintry sky. 'In Saint Anthony we almost forget the stars,' Janet murmured, as they entered the building. They climbed the stairs, and walked on tiptoe across the concrete floor, as if they were approaching a shrine.

In a little room at the top of the stairway gathered a group not unlike the receiving line at the Faculty Wives' Club receptions, chatting together. On the outer rim of the circle, Mrs. Porter in a black velvet dress trimmed with ermine, her hair dyed a bright brown and elaborately marcelled, received her guests. Beneath all her pompous, blundering exterior fluttered a shrinking spirit, aware of its own insignificance. But to-night as she greeted each newcomer, she put on an unwonted show of satisfaction, as foreign to her as her expensive gown and stylish hairdressing. She explained to those who had the kindness to linger for more than a formal greeting, that in giving the University this telescope she and her husband offered Chippewa students a chance to view the heavens and see the glory of God. At her words the mental image of Professor Porter rose before one, the scornful eyes with the uncomfortable twitch when he looked at people, the chewed mustache, the coldly detached voice.

Mrs. Porter took Janet's arm, and accompanied them, with asthmatic pants, up the second flight of stairs. Keith opened a heavy door. A rush of wind over them. In the cold, dark room, one made out shadowy forms, gazing up into the vaulted airiness above them. The open dome, with the telescope pointed toward an arc of starry sky, was like a helmet, cleft at one side by a sword. The stars seemed nearer than they did outside, as if some human force had drawn them toward the earth, upon which they now glanced with a freezing disdain. On a platform high above his guests stood Professor Porter, his head surrounded by first and second magnitude stars.

'It's like the stage for a Greek tragedy,' Janet whispered to her husband.

Mrs. Porter was pressing Janet's arm. 'Mr. Porter seems almost like a minister 'way up there. The starry firmament, you know — declareth his handiwork.'

At her words one felt that the God of her simple theology sat enthroned a few inches above the tip of the telescope.

Finally the electric stairway lowered Professor Porter to the level of his guests. Brushing past them with an indifference equal to that of the fiery suns and the planets swinging through the arc of the heavens, he began giving directions to his assistants.

There were clicks, groans. Several of the women emitted hysterical giggles.

Professor Harris, not yet informed of the astronomer's uncertain temper, stepped up to him.

'Well — Doctor — going to show us Jupiter to-night?'

Professor Porter bowed. 'This instrument was not designed to display Jupiter,' he said. Then he turned to his guests. 'Do you want to look at Jupiter? Anything you wish. The reflector is your toy to-night.'

Janet fancied his smile, invisible in the darkness, a grimace like that of a stern Assyrian god cut in stone.

As Mrs. Porter moved away toward the door to look after belated guests, Mrs. McIntosh took her place between Keith and Janet.

'Just hang around until the rest have had their look. Mr. Porter has promised to give us the Andromeda nebula.'

They stepped back to make way for Professor Harris and the others advancing toward the electric stairway.

The first group moved upward slowly. As they rose, apparently by invisible means, one was reminded of old paintings of saints swept through the heavens. On the observation platform the women gave out little cries of delight. 'Wonderful — just wonderful! Do you think any one lives 'way up there, Professor Porter?'

One drove succeeded another. The initiated gathered be-

low to compare their raptures in voices that grew loud with excitement. They had seen the reflector turned on the biggest planet in the heavens. The moons revolving around it were the cutest things. And those funny dark bands. Yes, dark straight lines. Astronomy had put on an effective little show for the occasion.

Mrs. McIntosh chuckled. 'The barbarians invading Porter's new church!'

Janet retreated into the shadows. The human forms on the stairway against the sky were like pilgrims mounting a hilltop, slowly gaining the summit. If the women would only stop talking!

The bitter cold in the room finally dispersed the star-gazers. When they had had their peep and had talked it over, they opened the heavy door and sought the warmth and light of Mrs. Porter's reception room. One could hear the murmur of their voices below, like some hidden underground stream.

Professor Porter once more set the machinery of the telescope going. Wheels moved. A clattering leap, like a giant struggling to free himself from chains. Then the clicking stopped. Quiet. More groans. The telescope stirred slowly. Professor Porter muttered an oath.

'It's very difficult to fix a huge telescope exactly,' Dolly McIntosh explained to Janet. 'They worked until two o'clock the other night to get the Andromeda nebula. He's probably in a devilish temper by this time.'

They waited patiently. Once more the subterranean stirrings of machinery. A fall, a rise. Professor Porter continued to give out mysterious signals. 'Right—ascension—declination—right—ascension—declination,' like a weird incantation over and over again. Another silence. Perhaps, after all, the telescope would never fix itself upon that desired spot of sky. Again the machinery muttered. Bang—crash—a great heaving. The black column of the telescope swung around. Porter, alone on the observation platform,

looked into his glass. More shouts. The telescope made a slight quiver. A grunt from the vault above them.

'At last,' breathed Dolly. 'Now for the nebula.'

The little group of scientists, Janet and Keith ascended to the platform.

Professor Porter turned. 'A favorable night,' he said. 'I never saw it better.' He nodded to Keith and Janet, the only interlopers present, and motioned the latter beside him.

'I've never looked through a telescope,' she informed him shyly. 'I'm just an amateur star-gazer.'

'Well,' he sounded almost kind, 'we'll have to explain something about the spiral nebulae. They're the astronomers' latest playthings.'

For a long time scientists had observed these nebulae, apparently among the stars, but possibly outside them, hundreds of thousands of them; tens of thousands of light-years away, rotating slowly, one turn in a million years.

Janet's imagination, chained to a familiar universe, grew dizzy, sickened, refused to plunge into infinite space and time. It was like listening to Denbroch, measuring once more the limitations of her pigmy brain. The important thing, she thought, shivering as the winds of the open sky swept over her, was to be humble, to recognize the greatness of other minds, the commonplace materials of one's own.

He paused to stoop over and look into his glass. A murmur of approval.

The Andromeda nebula, he continued, instead of being a vast mass of gas lying out among our stars, was in reality a distant galaxy so far removed that a million years was required for its light to reach the earth; in astronomical measurements it was a million light-years away, fifty thousand light-years in diameter. It was approaching the earth with the speed of two hundred miles a second. In shape and size it was similar to our familiar galaxy, the Milky Way, and composed of millions, possibly billions of stars.

'Look—here now—a soft mass of light—like a cocoon.'

Janet stepped forward. There it lay, an island universe the men called it, flashing before her eyes like the broad column of Roman candles in her childhood. She suppressed a startled cry. Once Roman candles, held courageously in the hand, had given her that same terrified wonder, that exquisite delight. She looked again. Surrounding the soft mass were stars, multitudes of stars, as Professor Porter had told her, large, small, but all brilliant and hard-pointed, some appearing in the front of the blue-black night, others behind, back, back, receding into immeasurable space and revealing the immense depth of that starry galaxy.

'So many stars,' she breathed.

'The only ones you can see are thousands of times brighter than the sun,' Professor Porter reminded her.

As she lingered, she observed the black gaps in the midst of the spiral nebula, filled with tiny stars, as if their needle points had pierced through that cocoon-band of light.

With a sigh she surrendered her place to Dolly McIntosh.

The men in a compact group were talking together, with the fresh zest of children. Porter's voice was alive, warm. They were discussing Reynolds's spectroscopic experiments, his investigations of the chemical composition of stars, comets, nebulae. Giant and dwarf stars, temperature of stars, simple and complex atoms, chemical compounds. All this the scientists had captured, made the sun, the moon, the stars give up their secrets to a mechanism of tubes and prisms.

The material world—salaries, food, houses, those puny things which the mob measures as important—hardly existed for them. Reynolds queer, nervous little man, with his desk at home jammed against his dictionary stand and his little boy's rocking horse, the baby crying upstairs, Reynolds went on studying the stars. Porter, with a stupid wife at least ten years older than he, at last had his reflector, his magic toy. So many years just creeping along. A crippled scientist. Now the giant stride forward. Spencer, dreaming of new systems of thought in that wretched room over the

garage. Keith —— Men had something — their work. It isolated them, saved them, transformed a grey world into a universe of wonder. And women, seldom comfortable away from the reassuring intimacy of earth. Men and women farther apart than she, Janet Lamberton, frail mortal, from those suns swung out into space too gigantic for the mind to fathom.

Mr. Reynolds coughed near Janet's ear. 'He's going to show us another. I asked him. In Ursa Major.'

The nebula in Ursa Major, the Big Dipper, Messier 101, prosaic designation for beauty, for loveliness almost beyond imagining. A circle of light, soft, luminous, like the wheel of a water-mill throwing off foam, cascades of spray. All the stars around, playful, friendly in the sweet night.

Even Dolly had nothing to say of beauty so perfect, so utterly remote from man.

But beauty — even the gay beauty of that turning water-wheel — made one sad, lonely. Janet put out her hand and touched Keith's sleeve. Instinctively one groped for the closeness of another human being. What were his thoughts at this moment? She, his wife, didn't know. It was no use. One couldn't hold them. Their telescopes, their spectroscopes. Wonders and miracles. More secrets revealed. More victories won. All of it increasing that immeasurable space between the sexes, too wide even for the infra-red rays of the new photography to penetrate.

They took their places on the stairway, slowly descended. Janet, in front clutching the rail, clung to it with tense fingers, like a drowning man a rope. Looking down, out of the darkness, in the feeble flicker of light at the base of the telescope, she was conscious of Mrs. Porter, a dim, blurred face, eyes shrouded behind spectacles, gazing up at the great reflector.

CHAPTER XII

BUSINESS EXIT

1

Angela Eliot's uncle was dead. The evening papers had big headlines to announce that another of the distinguished pioneers was no more. A biographical account of Mr. Holliday, his rise from poverty by his own efforts, his splendid business principles, his picture gallery, took up columns of space for several evenings. Keith and Pierce taught Winthrop Eliot's classes until after the funeral.

Pierce brought the unexpected report to Janet: 'Holliday's cut off Angela with a paltry fifteen thousand. They're in a terrible hole. His money's going for an art museum.'

'Fifteen thousand is something.'

'Not for them. Eliot's in a desperate mess really. It seems they've been running behind every year. Counting on Angela's inheritance. If her aunt had survived Holliday, she'd have come in for close to eight hundred thousand.' Pierce whistled.

Eliot also confided the low state of his affairs to Keith.

'Janet,' Keith asked, 'do we live on my salary?'

'We manage to. What else could we live on?'

'Eliot asked me. I told him I didn't know — I thought so.'

'Pierce says he's badly in debt.'

'I fear he is, poor fellow. He doesn't know quite what to do. By the time his most pressing bills are paid and they've found some kind of place to live in, the money'll be all gone. And they've never kept within his salary.'

It was soon developed that Eliot had made his choice. The Saint Anthony Trust Company was taking him on at

a good salary. His social connections, hitherto a financial burden, were at last bringing their reward. His resignation from Chippewa was to take effect at the end of the term in January.

The announcement was received on the campus with sorrowful headshakings. A gentleman like Eliot going into business. He might as well be dead, so far as Chippewa was concerned. Not that Eliot's colleagues made any charges against the business world. Most of them knew nothing about it. Professor Masters, however, who could never quite forget that industry had scorched his garments, was as sorrowful as the rest. Eliot's decision made them realize how fortunate they were that they didn't have to become business men. Their salaries were small, but their life had its compensations. That downtown district devoted to the commercial activities of Saint Anthony — to have to spend all the days of one's life there! They thought of their own snug little world, fenced in by the stately oaks and elms that went farther back than the oldest citizens of Saint Anthony — its peace, its security. Panics, business reverses touched them little. They were always poor. When the Legislature felt prosperous, it voted larger appropriations. But the money went for new buildings, more stenographers, or a herd of blooded cows or sheep for the University Farm; almost never for salaries. So good and bad times were all the same to them. It didn't matter.

Poor Winthrop Eliot! He was now exposed to the storms of the business world — that tempestuous, unsteady, hard world. The members of his department talked of a farewell dinner. But they couldn't agree about the propriety of such a ceremony. After all, it wasn't as if Eliot were leaving Saint Anthony. How much simpler if he were!

'But we'll never see him any more. He might as well be going to China,' concluded Professor Masters.

Yes, he might; and yet they went through the hollow show of pretending they'd see him all the same. They assured him that he'd be dropping into their offices with his

pipe as he always had. Eliot smiled, and replied that of course he would.

During the last weeks of his academic career, he became very silent, looked very tired. After he had once announced his new position to his colleagues, he made no further reference to it. Nor did they. It would be like speaking of one freshly dead whom the survivors have not yet learned to mention without violent grief.

Although the men commiserated Eliot, their wives were less tragic about his new position in the business world. They speculated about his salary. Some had heard he was starting at five thousand dollars. Others reported seven, eight, even ten thousand. There weren't many men who could leave a university job at thirty-six hundred for a splendid business opportunity at ten thousand, they reminded their husbands. Spirited partners replied that they must give some credit to a wife who had provided the necessary social connections with the financial powers. Others met such taunts with silence, reflecting that a man couldn't expect his wife to understand the intellectual stimulation of a vocation like his. No use trying to explain. Dolly McIntosh was one of the few women who said loudly that Angela Eliot ought to be ashamed of herself. She had ruined her husband's career with her airs and social pretensions. Why — why did poor men with intellectual ambitions marry such creatures? One day when she saw Professor Eliot approaching her, she quickly crossed the street to avoid him. She just couldn't, she told Janet. She was afraid she'd begin bawling like a baby.

Some one would now be elevated to the associate professorship left vacant. All signs pointed to Pierce, even though Keith had come two years earlier. Pierce had risen steadily in the favor of Professor Masters, who had the ears of the Dean, the President, and the Board of Regents. His suggestions were equivalent to a final decision.

Mary lost her temper when her associates made their prophecies.

'It's clear enough who's the better man,' she broke out — 'the sounder and more scholarly.'

'Ah,' they reminded her, 'as if that mattered.'

'If Professor Masters does a thing like that,' she wept to Janet, 'I'm not going to stay. I just can't stand it.'

'Mary,' Janet said calmly, 'we might just as well face the situation. Pierce is an excellent teacher. You have to admit that. He sees what is needed, and he provides it.'

'He's dishonest — scheming like a fox. Just managing that old fool Masters.'

'Managing him wisely, too. Masters *is* a fool in some ways. He needs managing. I appreciate your sponsoring Keith, my dear. But even you — once ——'

'I didn't appreciate him then. He's the only man here that knows enough to help me with my dissertation. I told Masters so. The only scholar in the department. And he just grinned in that leathery way of his and said he regretted there weren't more advanced students at Chippewa for Dr. Lamberton.'

'Exactly. But there aren't. Two or three of you every year. And mobs of undergraduates. Hundreds majoring in English. And for them — sad as it may be for Keith's fortunes — Pierce is the man, not my husband. Or even Professor Witherspoon.'

'That ladies' club monkey! Oh ——' Mary began to weep again.

'I've thought it all out. It's not pleasant reflection.'

'If he'd only get his book out. Then they'd see. Janet can't you *make* him?'

'That's what I hope. But don't you know Keith well enough by this time, Mary, to see that no person can make him do anything?'

'That's why I admire him so much. He has standards — ideals — real independence.'

Janet sighed. If one weren't married to Keith, he would be the most wonderful person in the world.

As soon as his classes started that fall, Keith had stopped

writing his chapters. No more time for that little game. His courses, he explained to Janet, demanded much new reading.

'They're just an excuse for a mental debauch, dear boy,' Janet taunted him. 'You know too much already for your students. They couldn't digest what you gave them last year.'

'If I thought I had to stop knowing more,' Keith began in a slow, troubled voice, 'I'd hate my job — couldn't go on with it. But all the time — so much ahead ——'

'Couldn't you do some writing Saturdays and Sundays? That much at least. You need to keep writing.'

'I'm not ready to write. That puerile stuff I did last summer!'

'Some of it was magnificent. What man in this country — name one — is writing criticism equal to it?'

'This country!' Keith's scorn was unutterable.

'In England, then. Or even your beloved France. They're all seeing the eighteenth century with rosy spectacles. Every book I read this summer. I mean the literary scholars. Even the historians get sentimental. The economists — they're saying something.'

'But Janet — if you knew what's in my mind — what I'm fighting to get out some day ——'

2

At the weekly meeting of Mrs. Harris's committee, at last winding up the business which had called it into existence, she said quietly to Janet, 'May I see you a moment afterward? There's something I want to talk over with you.'

When the others had gone, Mrs. Harris leaned back in the swivel-chair in front of the paper-littered desk in her official sitting-room. 'You've heard of this new project we've swung over on the clubs here — the College Women's and Women's Clubs?'

'No.'

'Vocational guidance. It's shocking the way nothing is done here for the women students except in teaching. Many

of them go into that profession just because they know of nothing else. So I've been working to get a bureau of vocational guidance started; to collect material on employment open to women. Get statistics on salaries. Travel around to interview employers. Make the proper connections.'

'Why, Mrs. Harris, I think that is an admirable idea. I suggested it myself to the Faculty Wives' Club, but they didn't feel equal to the responsibility.'

'No, they wouldn't. I didn't even consult them. They want distraction. Not that I blame them.' Mrs. Harris in her position had to be tactful always. Sometimes she saved herself just in time. 'But the other clubs have voted responsibility for paying a permanent secretary. I'm negotiating with the University now for an office. There's plenty of space going to waste in the Women's Building. They'll pay a secretary twenty-five hundred dollars. Three thousand later on if she shows unusual ability. And traveling expenses, of course. I told them the kind of woman needed was the best we could get.'

'Especially in starting the thing.'

'Exactly.' Mrs. Harris looked up. 'I suggested you, Mrs. Lamberton, for such a position.'

'Me — why ——'

'Your work on this committee has demonstrated your executive ability and tact. You know how to get on with difficult people. With me, for instance. I know I'm difficult. And yet I'm not such a fool I didn't see when you were managing me.'

'My dear Mrs. Harris!' Janet protested.

Mrs. Harris rubbed her nose violently. 'Now down to business. Will you take the appointment? I can get it for you.'

'I — I'd have to think it over. It's so unexpected — different from anything ——'

'I sounded out Professor Page. I found out what were your good points as a teacher. Even your disqualifications for philosophy convinced me you'd suit this job.'

'I'm a disqualified philosopher, am I?'

'Not muddle-headed enough for metaphysics. Too sensible. Direct. A tendency to simplify issues. Perfect. We musn't waste all that. When I first heard you had to give up your teaching here to marry a charming man — he's very charming, my dear, even though I couldn't live a day with him — I was furious. Sex persecution. I find it everywhere. They'll try to ditch me as soon as I get everything running smoothly. Just you wait. I'm an exception to the rule, they keep telling me. And they don't like exceptions. It's a wonder women ever accomplish anything.' She gave Janet a grim smile. 'When I saw your executive talents going to waste —— Put a good Swede in your kitchen; a fairly recent emigrant as yet unspoiled. She'll do more in a day than you could in a week and do it better.'

'Yes, probably she could.'

'And you'd be free to use your talents to some constructive advantage.'

'It would be interesting work. I can see that. Exciting.'

'Surely would. You think it over. Let me know in a few days.' Mrs. Harris swung around on her chair, and the interview was over.

Janet walked the few yards that separated her from home slowly. Twenty-five hundred dollars — more than she had ever earned teaching. An office on the campus. And she had always got on well with girls; made friends of them, not too intimate ones, and never inspired 'crushes.' Yes, it would be interesting work. Very interesting. Two years ago, she would have jumped at such a chance. Mary — if she told Mary — Mary wouldn't understand. She — Janet — didn't want the job — any job. All the time Mrs. Harris had been talking, she knew, clearly, without the slightest doubt, that she didn't care a button what vocation girls chose or who guided their destinies.

Marriage had changed her, taken away her ambition. Her desire to be something — somebody — an independent woman with a career —— One always talked about a career

for women — never a profession —— That was gone from her. All she dreamed of now was Keith's success and security. One couldn't have security without success in one's work. They went together. If she could help him ——

3

She opened her front door. A shabby house — shabby without, bare within — and yet it was home. She loved it. She had made it of almost nothing. She kept it, cared for it, with her own hands. Swept, dusted, scrubbed with a fierce kind of delight. Not that she liked housework as housework. But she liked making a house into a home, keeping it sweet, orderly, serene. Servants couldn't do that. Only the mistress could. She had done it. Keith's home and hers —— People liked it, said it was charming, didn't notice the emptiness, the cheap curtains, cheap rugs, cheap everything. They were comfortable there. She had worked hard, but she had something.

If she told Mary why she didn't want a job, Mary would protest, snort with rage. Dear old Mary! How Janet pitied her! Being a wife was so comfortable. Of course there were moments when she felt sorry for herself, worried over bills, foresaw bleakness ahead. But most days she settled down into the serenity of her life like a lazy cat on a cushion before a warm fire. She liked the unhurried, uneventful quality of being a woman in her own home. She loved to linger over breakfast, sip her second cup of coffee. One's own coffee was delicious. Boarding-houses, even the best hotel in Saint Anthony couldn't make coffee like hers. She sat at the table, watching the morning sun slip over the tablecloth, over her green-and-yellow breakfast set, a wedding-present and a daily joy. Keith kissed her good-bye, went off to the University or to his study, left her sitting there. She had such pleasant thoughts. She felt like a butterfly flitting over her flower garden, or like a humming-bird. She and Keith had been so happy last summer after young Spencer was gone. Yes, with Pierce and Mary gone. No one

but each other. They admitted, a little ashamed at their treachery to two dear friends, that they liked best to be all alone with each other.

Then days when she didn't feel well — didn't get up for breakfast. Keith had learned to make good coffee. Poor, clumsy boy! She lay in bed, half-sick, not so ill as to be utterly miserable, and enjoyed her inactivity. Sometimes she bestirred herself for luncheon, sometimes she didn't. Keith came home to make her tea and hard toast, to fill her hot-water bottle. No, her head didn't ache so hard. She'd get up in time for tea. He looked so worried. Illness terrified him, probably because he was never ill himself. He'd get tea those days, even make sandwiches. Cream cheese and watercress, her favorites and his. No, Mary couldn't understand all that. She charged off to her classes on days when bronchitis made her speak only in a whisper, took huge doses of aspirin when she had a headache, and went on. Once Janet had pulled her drugged self through interminable hours of teaching, but now no more.

She crept through the hall and up to the study door. If Keith would only get his book done, the book he started in the summer, what she, not he, considered the making of a book. She asked only that. If she could make him. Some way. Then Mrs. Harris and her job —— She waited. Not a sound within. She tiptoed away, leaning against the banisters. No, it was too much. She couldn't force herself to such a desperate move. Making one's self responsible for another person. But if she did nothing? If she let Keith muddle along endlessly in his own way?

Janet dropped down on the stairs and pressed her head fiercely against the hard wood of the step above her. She must — she must do it. Make him choose. She sat upright and whipped herself into drawing up a compact with herself. It was like one made in blood. If Keith would agree to write a preliminary book that could be easily completed that spring, she would give up the job. If not —— Her fighting blood was up. If he wouldn't, there was no way out,

no escape for either of them. She, as secretary to the Vocational Bureau, would give all her time to the professional future of women students at Chippewa. Keith would go on with his book alone. She would have no time to give him. Keith would flounder deeper and deeper in intricate details year after year. She would get more and more efficient as a vocational expert, earn three-thousand dollars. They'd have a bigger income, one they could live on, and also mediocrity, inescapable mediocrity. Professor Masters might keep Keith on at Chippewa out of pity. He was a soft-hearted man, really. But no promotions.

Leaping up from the stairs, she hurried toward the study. She must do this thing right away, tell him. If she waited —— With an inner cry of protest against what she was about to do she knocked at Keith's door.

'Busy, dear?'

'Home, darling, so soon? I planned to have tea all ready.'

'Yes business done.' Her voice was a little hoarse. She coughed, and then went on. 'All wound up to a finish. For the present Mrs. Harris can't think of a thing for me to do.' Janet perched on the desk and swung one foot to express her defiant sense of ease. If Keith had been less preoccupied, he would have perceived that his wife was overacting a part. But he saw nothing.

'God be praised! That terrible woman. Now I'll get tea. You lie down on the couch till I bring it in. Shall we have it here today?'

'Anywhere.' Janet flung her coat and hat into the nearest chair and stretched out on the couch. When he returned with the tea-tray, she decided to wait before she delivered her little speech. She was gambling for high stakes.

'You look so tired, dear,' Keith remarked. 'Here — let me pour you some tea. Now you'll feel better.'

As she attempted to chat gaily over their tea-drinking, her voice sounded high-pitched and harsh, humming in her ears.

At dinner she was especially animated, not allowing a

moment of silence to fall between her and Keith. Afterward she read aloud out of Swift's essays.

'He was a great man,' she said when she closed the book, 'a very great man.'

'Great and also hard. Perhaps a litttle too hard. If we should see ourselves and the rest of the world as he did ——'

As they climbed the stairs together Janet decided that she would never be great, but she might be hard. She felt hard now as she prepared to declare her ultimatum to Keith in the security of their bedroom. In a house like theirs, this room was the only place where they could be safe from interruption.

She closed the door, took off her amber beads, looked at the wan face in her mirror.

'Don't — don't let me fail,' she whispered to the face reflected there.

As she folded back the counterpane and got out her slippers and dressing-gown, she told herself, with quiet, inward moans, that she must do it, must hurt him, must hurt herself. Covering her eyes for a moment, she summoned all her strength.

The room was dark and silent. She lay with Keith's arms around her.

In a weak voice she began, 'Mrs. Harris has offered me a job, dear.'

'You?' he questioned sleepily.

She explained what it was. 'I'm to tell her next week.'

'But you don't want another job, darling. Am not I ——'

'Yes, but — this is one I get paid for doing.'

'You mean that I ——'

'We need more money.'

'Poor girl.' His lips touched hers. 'I know we do. Never mind. Some day.'

'Pierce is going to get advanced to Winthrop Eliot's job, isn't he, Keith? Mary seems to think so.'

'Oh — possibly. I hadn't thought. He deserves it right enough.'

'That leaves little chance for you.'

'My chance will come.'

'How many years will that be?'

'I don't know. How sleepy I am! I get so sleepy. Funny, isn't it?' he yawned.

'I've almost decided to take that job.'

'Really now! You *aren't* serious, Janet?' Keith, whose standards of feminine propriety were based upon the helplessness of his mother and sister, could not grasp the revolutionary idea that a woman, especially one with a husband to support her, might have yearnings for economic independence. Upon her husband's conservatism Janet had built up her conspiracy.

He gave her a playful shake. 'You teasing creature!' He leaned over her.

'No, I'm serious.'

'You want a job? The way Mary says?'

'Not the job. The money. Exactly what we need to be comfortable.'

'My God, Janet! What'll I do without you? You were going to help me finish my book.'

'Was I? What help could I be?'

'All those cards. You know what a mess I was in. Keep me straight, you know.'

'I tried to keep you straight last summer. But you wouldn't — keep straight, I mean.'

'Last summer?'

'Your writing — those chapters. I intended them for your book. I told you they were good — that they'd make a book. You laughed at my idea — laughed at such a book.'

'Really, darling, I — surely you ——'

'I meant it. I saw there was a good book; a book good enough to save us, to show Masters that you, too, as well as Pierce, were good for something.'

'But I know what I want to write. Even you — my wife — no one ——'

'Then it's settled.' She released herself from his arms

and covered her face with her hands. She musn't cry now. She wouldn't. She clenched her teeth tightly together.

'Listen to me, Keith. I'm serious in what I'm telling you. I, your wife, presume to interfere in your intellectual affairs. They happen to concern me as well as you. You're an ineffectual teacher here at Chippewa. No, listen to me, please. I've visited your classes — I know. You turn long-distance guns on students a few feet away. Your bullets don't touch them — not a hair — not one of them. They go straight over their heads into space. Please — please don't interrupt me. It's presumptuous of me, but I'm going on. In a place like Chippewa they can't afford men like you. You're too expensive. They're not civilized enough.'

'My book — a hasty, premature book —— what good is that, then? Why do you —— '

'Even a place like Chippewa likes to decorate itself with a scholar or two. Universities have their inferiority complexes. They need a man with a reputation outside their walls to point to: "Look at him. A scholar. His books praised in English and French reviews. An American — educated chiefly abroad — but still an American produced this book. That man — professor at Chippewa, Iowa, Wisconsin." It doesn't matter —— '

'And you — you Janet — ask me to write a book I can't be proud of — that you can't —— '

'I'd be proud of anything you wrote. Before you got done with it, it would be you. And of that I'd be proud.'

'You don't entirely despise me, then?' The words came out in a strained, unnatural voice.

'Darling —— ' She took him into her arms, kissed his forehead, his mouth, his nose. 'Can't you see it's because I'm so proud of you — that I can't bear — can't stand it!' She hid her face against his shoulder.

'You're crying. I can feel it. My girl, I — anything ——' He pressed her violently against him. 'Don't cry that way. If I'm so blind — and stupid that I —— If you feel this way. I respect, honor your judgment. You know I do, darling.

More and more all the time. If you desert me, take that job — I'm so discouraged, sometimes. I have such dreams of what I can do — and then my attempts —— Oh, my dear, don't give me up. I know I waste time, don't get on. I want to for your sake — yes, really. Once I didn't care. Now — that Spencer room — the poverty — I lay awake hours at night — when you were asleep. But I didn't know what to do. If I ——' Keith touched her cheek. 'Janet, tell me — what is it — you think that book ——'

'All I ask is that you go on writing as you did last summer. Not think of a book, of anything. And when it's done ——'

'What then?'

'Send it to Professor — the man at Harvard.'

'Trevor, you mean?'

'Ask his opinion.'

'Devilish rot, he'll call it.'

'I don't ask anything but that.'

'That — that's simple enough.' A queer choking rose in his throat. He waited a moment, coughed. 'What complications women make over nothing at all! This momentous decision! Unless I show Trevor some chapters I've knocked up, you take a silly job. I swear, Janet, I don't believe you wanted that job much. Our pathetic poverty — I a failure — Pierce getting everything. Good Lord, child! The scenes in the bedrooms of the Chippewa faculty must be rare comedy. What poor outsiders like Pierce and Mary miss! They don't know the exquisite delight of life. Wedded pair facing suicide one moment, hysterics the next. You laughing — you're laughing at me, too. In the eighteenth century I'd have put you in stocks for this — the ducking-stool — led you out to be flogged in the city square.'

'Hush, Keith, stop. This isn't a joke. You swear that you — by April fifteenth — will send those chapters ——'

'April first, even. Come now, I'll be generous with you. April first.'

'And I'll tell Mrs. Harris.'

'Janet — you — darling.'

'Swear.'

'Cruel mistress, I swear. April first. Chapters done. Send Trevor. Anything else? Then it's your turn. Swear that you — Janet Lamberton — sleepy but sane ——'

'I'm not sleepy. I've suffered too much.'

' —— That you will stick a little while longer to a worthless, ineffectual failure of a husband. Succor him, try to raise him from low to high estate, keep his card-catalogue straight, his meandering mind from faltering, his stupid students from sleeping, his revered departmental head from firing.'

'Keith, darling, I swear.'

'Now we'll go to sleep.' He yawned again. 'I *am* sleepy.'

In spite of his yawn, Keith tossed all night, back and forth. Janet lay quiet, her eyes staring through the darkness. All that raillery of Keith's — yes, she knew. She had heard that gasping sob nearly escape him. He had covered up his wounds, his bleeding wounds with his banter. There were depths he hid even from her. She loved him for it. And yet ——

Janet heard the milk-carts, the street-cars, the sparrows on the verandah roof. All night she made dizzy plans back and forth. One thing was settled. She'd tell Mrs. Harris in the morning that she must find another vocational secretary.

Keith, his face turned away from Janet, lay on the hard edge of the bed. Marriage — a wife. Why had a man like him taken a wife? Money — talk of money. Food, clothes, shelter, the great realities for other men. They married, had children, labored to care for them. This was their life. Normal men they were — close to the ant, the horse at the plough. But a few with their strivings for perfection, their restless hunger that has no end ——

Keith writhed in his bed, felt the beating of pain at his temples, the sweat on his forehead.

Good work took time. One couldn't push it, force its completion. And Janet said there was no time. Time was money. Money — for him there had always been enough. And if there hadn't been, it wouldn't have mattered. But when a man had a wife, he couldn't expect her to share his indifference to a material sphere never very real to him. To her, to others, it was real.

That any one should interfere with *It*. His wife. Janet. He hated her — hated everything that came between him and it. Even he had never tried to control what dwelt in him, dominated him, and yet was as coldly remote as a dynamo supplying power for some great plant. How could he explain — even to her — what it was? It was his mind, and yet not his. As a young boy he had become conscious of this strange thing which dragged its possessor where it would. It had no regard for his comfort, his peace. And yet he obeyed it. He thought in those far-off days that every one was controlled, as he was, by the same resistless and fierce spirit. When he grew older, he knew this was not so. Only a few were like him. Who they were he did not know. It was something no one talked about, like deformity, hereditary disease. One was not proud of such a possession. But one must accept it. It was there.

The effect upon his studies was clear enough. Like other men he collected information, took notes, organized his main ideas. But then this inner power took possession of him. He was trying to re-create a past era, its outer appearance, its inner life. Slowly, day by day, it appeared to him. No dead scholarship. A past age lived again. He saw it more clearly than the streets of Saint Anthony, his classroom, his students. Men and women of the eighteenth century surrounded him. They walked through streets long destroyed, moved through buildings long razed to the ground. He looked into their minds, understood the limitations of their thought. The bare outlines of this picture, the main figures, the subordinate figures, the background of brick, stone, forest, had already become clear to him. Now he

was engaged upon the process of detail. Myriads of lines, delicate problems of light and shade.

But for this gigantic creative effort he must be patient. Time — time. And Janet said there was not time. So he had promised to get something done. He would. Not his book. Never that. Fortunately there was a man's everyday stride, his ordinary endeavor. It was the side of him which taught Chippewa classes, demanded food, sleep, gregarious communion with his kind. This man could write a book. He had promised. He would write it . . . Keith dug his clenched hands into his eyes . . . When it was done, if that cruelly critical self within him had not fled from him, like a healthy man from a plague-stricken city, he would go back, try patiently to put the infinitely complex pieces into place, reassemble the parts of his creation.

Now he must go to sleep. The next few months would be like driving himself into exile, shutting himself up within the grave. But men did those things to live. There was no choice.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOPHISTICATES

1

JANET, standing outside the study door, leaned her head against the hard, cold wood, and ached with the longing to enter. Immediately after breakfast Keith had shut himself in. What was happening behind that closed door? No, she mustn't go in. Not yet. Keith must pass through his first struggles alone. She tiptoed away. Her part was that of the mother of grown-up children who suffer before her tortured eyes. Knowing they must fight out their own struggles, she holds herself back from rushing to their aid.

Keith wrote for hours every day, emerging from his study only for lectures and meals. He had little appetite. Tea he generally dismissed as a waste of time. Janet watched him anxiously. At breakfast, after a late vigil over his papers the preceding night, his lean face, always pale, looked almost green. But was this her silly imagination? At dusk when she came into the room and forced him away from his desk, there were often crimson spots over his high cheekbones. Fatigue. Yes, she knew. He couldn't persist in these immoderate stints of toil. He was becoming more stoop-shouldered, more gaunt. He'd get ill.

It was ghastly. She ought to have known better. This terrible responsibility she had taken upon herself — dictating what he should do. It was like Keith to drive himself in this mad fashion. Did he despise his work? Did he secretly despise her who had forced him to it? Meddling with another human soul was wicked — wicked —— She'd never do it again. But the harm was already started, and she must keep silent.

At night, lying upstairs alone waiting for Keith to stop working, to come upstairs to bed, Janet started at every creak in the old house shaken by the first winter storms. So many hours. He must have fallen asleep over his desk. If he didn't come soon ——

One night she could endure anxiety no longer. She was cold all over, chilled by nameless fears too terrifying to bear alone. She put on dressing gown and slippers and felt her way downstairs. Moving her hands cautiously along the walls, she advanced through the long, black stretch of corridor full of freezing drafts and sighing shadows. Keith's lamp made a faint glow at the farther end. A few more cautious steps toward it. The door was open. Keith sat at his desk writing steadily. He paused. Her heart stopped beating. Had he heard her? He went on again, looked over what he had written, frowned; with a sudden convulsion of disgust crumpled up the pages and threw them away from him. He sat staring in front of him, quite motionless, then leaned his tired head against his hands. Janet made her escape and got into bed once more. When Keith came upstairs, she pretended she was asleep, fighting against the pains that racked her as she lay immovable.

The next day when she met Pierce, she told him quietly what Keith was trying to do with his book. For some time she had wanted to take him into her confidence. He listened, then glanced away.

'I suppose it had to be done,' he said slowly. 'But he's so uncompromising in some ways. Are you sure ——' He broke off suddenly. 'It's the wisest thing he's ever done, of course,' he concluded, smiling upon her and hurrying upstairs.

Had Pierce spoken honestly? He looked so strange at first.

2

The only circumstance which encouraged Janet about Keith was the way he bounded out of his study at the sound of Barbara Emerson's voice in the living-room.

Toward all women he threw over himself a cloak of chivalry, but he managed, nevertheless, to avoid most of his wife's callers. Only a scholar far gone on the swift way to destruction could have resisted this lovely new friend of Janet's. Toward her, Keith fortunately showed that he was still as normal as any man need be, and Janet felt somewhat comforted.

Barbara was Mary's discovery. Early that fall, into the midst of the excitement over the nursery school and Janet's committee meetings, Mary had tumbled her latest case of oppression. One of her freshman students — Mary was always championing one of them against something — hadn't made Gamma Lambda because she was both clever and plain.

'A fatal combination,' shouted Mary, herself cursed by the like twin endowment, 'from which any well-behaved fraternity man at Chippewa flees.'

'What of it?' thought Janet, ruminating that, according to her friend's doctrine, irresistible woman should flee from man, never man from woman. 'Poor girl,' she said aloud. 'So Gamma Lambda wants only the sociable kind?'

'It isn't as if Mrs. Atkins hadn't brought Helen up with the one idea that all of life lay within the pales of Gamma Lambda. The way she's talked to that poor child — threatening to bring pressure — to make them take her daughter.'

'Oh,' murmured Janet, coming out of her abstraction at the mention of Helen Atkins and grinning at Mary. This was an awkward situation, indeed. At the glorious moment when Mrs. Atkins herself had been honored with the national secretaryship of her sorority, she had been defeated in her home chapter.

'I've been telling Helen she must make a scholarship record at Chippewa,' continued Mary. 'Just show those girls. But it's hard to put up a brave face at the start. I think if you'd ask her to tea, that might cheer her up a little.'

Janet hesitated. Mary, year after year, took up successive

batches of tiresome girls with unabated enthusiasm. 'Well ——' she faltered, not liking such offices much herself.

'And Barbara Emerson. She'd like to come, too. She was the only Gamma Lambda who befriended Helen. She's clever herself — could appreciate Helen. She's in Keith's seminar — thinks he's the most remarkable person at Chippewa.'

Mary's diplomacy was always of this kind, ostrich-like, sticking out of its cover. Janet laughed. 'Your flattery is irresistible, my dear. Ask them any time — ask them tomorrow.'

It was like Mary to emphasize Barbara Emerson's intellect and to omit any mention of her beauty. A glance at the tall, slender girl standing beside dumpy, spectacled Helen Atkins in the front hall the next afternoon gave sudden excitement and delight. Her voice had a cool ease. She whipped off her hat, releasing a fluff of fair hair. 'May I? I hate hats.' A shaft of sunshine from the open doorway caught the brilliant embroidery of a Russian dress of blue wool falling away from her in straight folds. Her face flashed out youth and a kind of breathless expectancy.

Janet, ushering them into the living-room, decided at a second glance that this girl was worth a little of Keith's valuable time, and excused herself to dig him out of his study. Miss Emerson was the prize from Wellesley whom Mrs. Atkins had labored hard the preceding year to capture for Gamma Lambda, Janet remembered. Well, the woman had taste, one must grant, in appreciating a variety of student rare at Chippewa.

On her return she found Mary talking to Helen about the satisfaction one got from intellectual conquest.

'Yes,' Helen's metallic voice responded, 'I told father I'd make a success of my work.'

The poor child had inherited her mother's loquacity along with her father's plainness. As she sat humped over in her chair, with her round, shiny face and gleaming spectacles fastened upon Mary, she was like a rude clay vessel beside

the porcelain fragility of her friend, whose head gracefully inclined as she listened to Keith.

'Why didn't you tell me,' she reproached Keith when their visitors were gone, 'that Miss Emerson was such a beautiful creature? You and Mary going on about her brains! As if they mattered with a face like hers.'

Keith blinked. 'I didn't say she was ugly, did I? Cloud of fair hair. Eternal questioning in her eyes.'

Mary looked perplexed. 'But she *is* intelligent,' she insisted. 'She admires you, Keith, admires you tremendously.'

Keith tried to look indifferent. 'She's the only clever person in my seminar.'

Even Mary joined in tardily with Janet's laughter.

'Does she follow you, dear? Ask nice discriminating questions the way Mary herself used to?'

'And the way she's stuck by poor Helen,' Mary reminded them, returning to the main issue with typical directness.

'Does that mean,' Keith inquired, 'that we never see one young lady without the other?'

At the moment Barbara Emerson was like a young cherry tree tossing its first show of blossoms. She had been slowly approaching this perfect moment of her youth. As yet, one guessed, no rude hand, no chill wind had touched her. Illness, unhappiness could stamp out such delicate beauty early.

Janet, seated behind the tea-table, reflected that perhaps faces didn't matter to other people as they did to her. The loveliness of a human face, especially a woman's, moved her more than a picture, a landscape. That kind of beauty was more common. But so many ugly, ordinary people, slight variations of a few plain models. One looked in crowds for the rare creation, and almost never found it. Then suddenly a face like this appeared unexpectedly, and one remembered it forever. But apparently most women didn't worship the perfection of their own sex in that way. Once on a train years ago, when Janet was a very young girl, she had seen a countenance that touched her as Barbara Emerson's did now.

When Janet confronted Pierce with the unexpected charm of Miss Emerson for the first time, she watched him narrowly to observe the effect. The prospect of that much-courted bachelor turning pale, feverish, fighting to control swift passions within, would provide a spectacle unequalled in the calm order of events at Chippewa. Pierce bowed in his stately fashion. He had already met Miss Emerson at various social affairs, it developed; especially at Angela Eliot's parties, where she was frequently included among the débutantes. He manifested no immediate symptoms of shock, but appeared what he always was, magnificently self-possessed, lightly humorous, inclined to adopt a scoffing tone toward Mary. He conversed at appropriate intervals with Miss Emerson, passed cups and sandwiches: in short, was both normal and useful.

'Oh, these men!' raged Janet, reflecting on the immobility of the creatures rightfully debased in Mary's clear mind. Now if she had beheld such a vision!

'Isn't she adorable?' she appealed to Pierce when Barbara had left them. 'There's not a girl equal to her among those I've met in Saint Anthony.'

'Her father's the biggest rascal in the State,' Pierce responded. 'At least in the State Legislature.'

'She's one of the brainiest girls here,' Mary trumpeted.

'That's the trouble with her father. Brains — lots — but used the wrong way.'

'I wasn't talking about her father,' Mary snapped back at him.

Barbara, soon a frequent visitor, appeared in a succession of Russian peasant frocks of blue, green, and purple, the very garments Janet would have worn if she could have ordered them carelessly from an expensive New York shop as Barbara did. But one must be grateful for the beauty she brought into a shabby, bare room. She was like flowers on a dinner-table, converting a simple meal into a gracious repast.

Sometimes Pierce dropped in to tea. Sometimes he didn't.

What if Barbara should fall in love with that indifferent young gentleman, Pierce Hadley? speculated Janet. It would be tragic. He had worn his armor of indifference so long that nothing could touch him. If his presence at the pleasant afternoon tea-drinkings made any difference to Miss Emerson, that young person gave no sign of an aching heart. She seemed perfectly satisfied with Keith and Janet. Without the awkward vehicle of words she conveyed the impression that she preferred them to any one else in Chippewa, and found in their home the peace of well-being and friendship stealing over her. Last year she had hated everything at Chippewa, her studies, Gamma Lambda, the fraternity boys who had been nice to her. But this year was going to be wonderful. It was as if she had implored them: 'Be kind to me, dear creatures. I'm so happy here — sitting on one foot, drinking tea out of a pleasant yellow tea-cup, hearing agreeable talk which forms into a delicate pattern of sense. Let me come often, and I'll be very good.'

'What a silent creature that girl is,' commented Pierce. 'Doesn't she ever say anything?'

That he should not respond to the soothing and yet eloquent silence of Barbara proved that Pierce was no better than other men in discerning real worth in women. He would fall in love wih some brainless, pretty fool he met at Mrs. Eliot's and spend the rest of his life hating her. Pierce she wanted to save. Next to Keith he was the most splendid man she had ever known. If Barbara would only do something.

Men ought to let women chose their wives for them! Left to themselves, they made an unutterable mess of marriage. Keith always laughed when Janet related the way she had deliberately courted him. Yes, she had. Without a little help from her, a skilful touch, push, shove at the correct moment he would have remained forever a bachelor. And such a bachelor! Helpless child that he was. Even the more resourceful Pierce needed a good wife.

If he could only see Barbara in the kitchen with her

making sandwiches, he wouldn't call her silent. Dignified, detached, she appeared, but underneath she was just a babbling girl. She confided that Keith was the most splendid man she had ever known, better even than the teachers at Wellesley.

'Don't you love his humor?' she asked. 'So quietly insinuating. It comes to us a little bit at a time. Does he tell you how slow we often are? But no, he wouldn't. He doesn't notice, I'm sure.' She was working as she never had before, really trying to learn something. Spending most of her allowance for books, beautiful volumes in large print on thick paper. 'Four years of college go so fast, don't they? If I had only known Professor Lamberton last year. But the girls said ——'

'Said what?' Janet asked in a quiet voice.

Barbara's face flushed, but she added quickly, with a disarming smile, 'That he'd be too much for me. And he is, you know. That's what is so delightful.'

Sometimes in their kitchen talks Barbara launched bitter attacks upon Chippewa. Did Mrs. Lamberton really know how frightful it was? Teaching — well, one saw a different side. Living in a sorority house — breakfast, luncheon, dinner, all the talk buzzing around the Beta Alphas, Gamma Lambda's chosen fraternity.

'They just live to flatter those boys,' scolded Barbara, looking up from her butter-spreading. 'Will Bill ask her to this? Jack to that? Guesses as to who'll get engaged to whom. Betty lets them all kiss her good-night. How will it come out? Especially Wyman Jones with such heaps of money. Bunny Thatcher trying the vampire lure. Circulating stories about her own corruptibility. The pink-cheeked boys, wanting her to tempt them. And this — in a university. To get a quiet place to study, Barbara had taken the attic room next to the cook. But it wasn't warm enough. She sat almost on top of her electric stove.

'You ought not live in a sorority house,' Janet protested.

'I tried other places first. The girls were worse. No rules

at all. Gamma Lambda does have some regulations. And the girls have better manners.'

Perhaps she was too hard on Chippewa. She hadn't wanted to come. She had loved her two years at Wellesley. But with her mother ill, she had to be nearer home. At Chippewa she could go to Wenonah every week-end. The small town which had grown up around her grandfather's lumber mills was an awful place to live in. No one good enough for her, her mother had always told her. But the unrespectable people were nice, very nice. Early in her childhood, when the lumberjacks were still cutting down the last of the timber, she had loved the winter expeditions to the camps with her grandfather. That was the past. Now only a little timber up North. Her father's company operated in the Far West, Wyoming and Washington. Wenonah was quietly dying, full of empty houses and stores, shrinking every year, and in winter quite desolate. Going back there made her feel sad. The country — miles of stumps — waste. When her mother was well again, the two of them planned to go to Europe for a year or two. Mrs. Emerson blamed Wenonah for her shattered health.

Pierce said that Emerson was an old scoundrel, who kept his wife out of Saint Anthony. Other women. The usual story. But he was reported to be a devoted father to his only child. Of him the daughter seldom spoke. Perhaps she knew more than he thought.

3

Keith had finished his big chapter on eighteenth-century art. He stood in the study door and called out to Janet, 'It's done. Come and hear.'

In the midst of cleaning the gas-range, she dropped the scouring-powder, rinsed off her hands, and hurried in to him, trying to cover herself with a matter-of-fact indifference to the momentousness of the occasion.

'Now, don't you say you like it if you don't, Janet.'

'Haven't I always been honest with you, dear?' she reproached him.

'Well, be careful.'

He read slowly, one sentence at a time.

'I must try to think it is some one else, not my husband,' she kept saying to herself.

Keith began brilliantly. He could write. Magnificent sweep, a fine controlled emotion, sentences with a surging beat, majesty in their rounded phrases, powerful words that haunted the memory. Her mind seized each fragment, held it with delight.

Keith read: 'Among the English painters, the sturdy Dutchmen persisted, beneath French and Italian style, English mist, English faces. Gainsborough knew his master; heaven for him was a place where Van Dyck would be.'

Time passed. On and on. At last the end.

Yes, it was good. She was satisfied. She nodded, felt queer inside, stole over to his chair and kissed him.

'It's magnificent, darling.'

'I thought it wasn't bad myself.'

'Now you won't do any more to-day,' she implored him.

But Keith was raised to a pitch of excitement necessary for writing. This was going to be one of his best working days. He mustn't waste it. 'There's not much time,' he reminded her. 'Every day now——'

So once more she lay in bed counting the black hours and waiting for Keith to stop his toil. The elation of the morning had drooped. Doubts again assailed her. Not that the chapter wasn't good. It might still be too good — at least too good for the readers an American professor could get. Of what use was she to judge that? She knew his style and was too familiar with his point of view. Even Pierce couldn't decide some things for them. There must be some one else — Barbara. Yes, she was remarkably intelligent, as Mary had said. Dear old Mary with her unquenchable faith in brains.

Footsteps on the stairs. Keith coming to bed at last.

'Do you know what I was thinking — lying here half-asleep?'

'Umph. Too late for thoughts.'

'That we might read your chapter to Pierce and Barbara and Mary at tea to-morrow.'

'Well ——' Keith, even when he was sleepy, was ready for experiment. 'Since I'm to dive down to the muddy depths of humanity, I might start on them.'

'Pierce for one thing — Barbara the other. She's the best undergraduate critic you can get here. What they say — it will be interesting at least.'

'Come to tea to-day.' Janet caught Mary running off to breakfast the next morning. 'Keith's going to read a chapter of his new book to us.'

'What for?'

'Oh, come along, Mary.' Janet gave her friend a push. 'Don't ask me troublesome questions.'

Pierce entered the living-room that afternoon with more than his usual impressiveness.

'You and I,' he enlightened Barbara, 'represent the average reader. Miss Giddings and Mrs. Lamberton the real critics.'

Barbara looked first at him, then at Keith, her eyes full of light, her lips parted in a slow smile. 'I feel very much honored to be one of your first readers, Mr. Lamberton.'

When Keith had reached the end, Pierce went at the chapter hammer and tongs. But the harder the blows descended, the more pleased Keith became. He had never outgrown the peculiar joy of the small boy with three or four urchins piled on top of him.

Thus Janet's experiment began. Pierce was the active critic. The others listened. Often the two men paced up and down the study, after the others had gone, to argue some hotly contested point. Was there, Keith parleyed, any epoch in history which could be distinguished for its taste? Every age was a mixture of good and bad. Likewise the eighteenth century. Keith could bring out a welter of evidence. Sir

William Chambers, who erected semi-Roman temples, pagodas, imitations of mosques and cathedrals, a shoddy Alhambra in Kew Gardens, had also achieved the nobility of Somerset House. Chippendale turned out his beautiful chairs at the same time that he made grotesque Chinese and Gothic beds. The Adam brothers worked in gilt and a profusion of garlands, rams' heads, and winged figures as well as in admirable harmonies of restrained detail. In an age of supposedly good taste Horace Walpole lived in a sham castle with a battlemented parapet constructed of lath and plaster which had to be renewed three times in thirty years. The possessors of Chippendale furniture, Adam fireplaces, Zucchi ceilings crowded their stately rooms with Chinese and Indian trinkets. The Hograth prints proved their desecration of their own chaste houses.

The only thing one could say was that some of the sound products of the past had lasted. Their beauty saved them. Perhaps there was more beauty in this age he had chosen to study, Keith concluded, when Pierce tossed a few facts at him, than in some others. But there was plenty of rubbish.

Beauty — how did it come? What produced it? Accident, Keith said. Utility, Pierce insisted. Even self-consciousness. But to the last theory Keith made vigorous objections. Never. Never. And so they went on and on.

The day the chapters on crafts and domestic arts were to be read, Pierce invited the author and his critics to drink tea out of the Worcester china he had discovered in a little village near Bath the preceding summer.

'It will add just the proper touch,' he insisted. 'The last good porcelain made in England before mass production ruined an art industry.'

Keith's severe glance rested upon the tea-set with its deep blue background, fine gold markings, and design of roses. He held a cup close to his eyes.

'Some of this china is very bad. Not only the English. The German and French, too. The collapse of a hand industry gave to the last relics of the Chelsea, Worcester,

Derby, and Bow factories an exaggerated value. Now this — very late stuff. Eighteen hundred at best. Imitation of Sèvres — the blue — and not deep enough. Usually they reproduced Nanking at Worcester.'

'Hear him!' scoffed Pierce. 'Pure envy.'

Janet and Barbara began to giggle.

'That rose design,' Keith went on. 'I can't say I altogether like it.' Turning to Barbara he explained that Mr. Hadley, a man of common-sense usually, had developed a regrettably sentimental interest in the past just because he had got hold of a little old china. 'Now the Chelsea statuette you brought home and those ridiculous Bow dogs — they're not bad. They're rather lucky finds. You see I'm no narrow critic, Miss Emerson, I don't go against these porcelain figurines just because they unwittingly disobey the latest dictates of line and design. I find them charming in their special way. They express their age, its gaiety of costume, its faith in careful detail. Bring out your trinkets, my boy.'

Pierce appeared encouraged. 'I'll bring them down to show you, Miss Emerson, since the grand man allows them a little merit.'

The Chelsea shepherdess was charming, standing demurely in a shade of green leaves, each delicately fashioned; her hooped skirt, trim bodice, and basket full of flowers were a melody of bright colors and dainty design. The Bow dogs, too, part of the collection of an eighteenth-century squire devoted to hunting, were lively figures; one severely plain, an early example of such work, the other, elaborate, a noble hunting dog with some foliage behind him and flowers at his feet. Barbara took them in her hands, each in turn.

'What a lovely feeling they have.' She ran her fingers over the thin edges of the china flowers and leaves. 'I envy you these,' she said, looking up at him.

While Pierce related the discovery of his treasures, Mary looked very bored. She had no reverence for antiquity; even literary remains she wanted in modern editions. Men who collected things, pictures, old books, china, she called ninnies.

Osmond in the 'Portrait of a Lady' she had seen through at the start. She couldn't understand why Isabel had been stupid enough to be taken in by him — a man who collected things. The human comedy enacted in the Lamberton living-room, with its interlocking circles of nonsense, ridicule, scoffing, rapier thrusts, made her scowl, and pull at her handkerchief.

Barbara had gradually become bold enough to attack Mr. Hadley when he belabored the beautiful writing of her favorite professor. She no longer allowed him to tear point of view, style, details to pieces without her protest. To-day she had met all of his criticism with steady objections.

Mary's eyes fastened on Barbara. How that child must despise Pierce Hadley! She contradicted everything he said. Well, she was glad of it, very glad. Most girls would fall in love with a man like him.

'Was there,' Pierce asked when they reached the end of the chapter, 'such a thing as eighteenth-century civilization? When you get done, isn't that what you're asking?'

Keith leaped from his chair, stood over Pierce, and began to sweep the air with his eloquent gestures. Eighteenth-century culture, viewed without sentiment, exaggeration, generalization — in short, as he viewed it — was the greatest, the ——

'Didn't you find it bewildering at first?' Barbara appealed to Janet.

Mary, toiling late at night, was fighting over the last chapter of her study of Crabbe. Almost at the end, she felt she had gone deep into the soul of a poet, but what she herself understood, she had expressed like a child. Each sentence had been wrung from her. Her book sounded tortured when she read it aloud. Not like the easy swing of Keith's writing. Keith deep and graceful at the same time.

As she stared in front of her, she longed for some power which could make her write of Crabbe as Keith wrote of architecture, of painting, of gardens — anything, it seemed — education, medicine, roads — packing into so few words a

wealth of significance, applying beauty, wit, irony, to matters of scholarly import usually made dull. Then Crabbe, whom she loved, but of whom she wrote with the heavy footing of a plough horse, would shine out as the great poet so few people knew him to be.

When Keith read his chapters aloud after tea —— But why did he read them? Who among them could judge Keith? Not she surely! Not Barbara, clever, but only a child. Pierce sometimes, even though she resented that superior gentleman's antics of criticism. How dared he? It was Janet's idea — that ridiculous reading aloud. She was trying out his writing on them, seeing if it would go. Was it too deep for them? Too intricate? Sometimes it was. But what did that matter? The reach of a man's mind — who had the right to confine it? Once she, like a fool, had condemned Keith for running all over, shooting this way and that, like some stupendous skyrocket. But not any more.

Janet wanted her husband to teach the mob. Silly creature! And with such a husband. Was Janet, after all, good enough for Keith? Mary had traitorous thoughts of which she was ashamed. She began once more to labor over her clumsy phrases.

4

At the weekly meetings of the Better Halves of Wisdom, Helen Early talked steadily of her husband's book. At last it was in the final stage of typing.

'I can't tell you the relief it'll be to get it out of the house. Just the sight of it gets on my nerves sometimes. We've spent four years scraping together the money to have it published by the Knickerbocker Press. A thousand dollars. Next fall we'll start in again hoarding up another thousand to give us a summer in Europe. We've talked of that every year since we've been married.'

The others agreed that it seemed a shame to have to pay for a book one had worked so long to write. Most dissertations weren't worth publishing, anyhow.

'But my husband's is. The men in his department say it's bound to be an authority on the subject. He's certainly slaved over it hard enough.'

'So have you, Helen,' Lily reminded her. Most women didn't appreciate themselves enough. Consequently other people didn't appreciate them. 'You've saved all that money.'

Anna and Lily also discussed the books their husbands were writing. Remarkable works they were, too. They couldn't let Helen take all the glory. Only Janet and Clara Slater remained silent. Janet, hearing the others, wondered that they could chatter so lightly on the making of a book. A creation which drained brain and blood. No, she couldn't talk about Keith's book. Even to these women she liked, her friends, friends without intimacy. Could one, she questioned, have intimate friends after one married? Not the same close relations, surely. Even with Mary, the old frank comradeship was gone. Marriage made one stand alone.

The reading of Keith's chapters before her own home circle left her limp and numb. She knew she ought to be grateful that Pierce freed her from the burden of delivering all the blows at a sensitive husband. Yes, it was much better. Again and again Pierce put into words what otherwise she would have had to say. At the time Keith waved his candid friend aside. Utter rubbish — all that. But afterward the words stuck in his head. 'Well — possibly,' he would say half-aloud, his head resting on his hands. 'There may be something in all that. What do you think, Janet?'

The book was fashioning itself into sure creation. The chapters written by a scoffing scholar the preceding summer were now admitted, even by Keith, into his present work with few changes.

'We'll shove them in,' he said. 'Anything to finish quickly.' Janet stared at him. 'They're as good as the rest,' he added.

To prevent immoderate devotion to his enterprise, Barbara used the car she kept at college for her week-end journeys home to tempt Keith to leave his writing and drive out into the country with Janet and her. Sometimes Mary went with

them, sometimes Pierce, whoever happened to be on hand at the moment.

As the winter wore on, Pierce became even more engrossed in his round of dinner-parties and dances. It was hard to understand how a man of his intelligence could so waste his time on people he pretended to despise. Recently he had begun spending his week-ends out of town, returning Monday morning before his first lecture. Yet with all this, he always had leisure, not only to listen to Keith's latest chapter, but to spend endless time discussing it.

The last meeting of the select company of critics before Christmas was held in Pierce's study.

'And you, Janet, are to be a lady,' Pierce commanded. 'I'm going to get tea myself. Perhaps I'll allow Miss Emerson to help a little.'

Janet leaned back in a comfortable chair and watched the alcohol flame under the copper tea-kettle. Pierce's room was a beautiful place for repose. Keith, wandering past the heavy mahogany book-cases which had sheltered the libraries of generations of clergymen, lawyers, and scholars, leaned over to examine a volume here and there, took one out of its place, and sighed as he replaced it. So many great books in the world and so little leisure to read them. Janet and Pierce looked at each other and smiled.

Mary, unwilling to squander a precious fragment of time, always rushed in at the last minute. To-day she slammed the front door with her usual vigor. A light scamper followed her up the stairs, and Barbara entered with the sandwiches.

Barbara, on this occasion, seated in front of the tea-table and the Worcester china, gracefully managed the high, slender tea-pot and cream-jug, and the cups sitting proudly on their gold standards. The rows of dark calfskin books behind her brought out the splendor of her yellow hair and the brilliant patches of embroidery on her dress. She belonged with Pierce's room, with the stateliness of his mother's portrait on the wall, with fastidious Pierce himself. This was her natural background. How stupid men were!

That night, Keith, getting ready for bed, remarked between yawns, 'Well, I suppose Pierce is going to marry Barbara.'

'Keith, what are you saying?' Janet sat up in bed and stared at him. 'Has he told you?'

'Of course not. Do I need to be told such things? It's inevitable — that marriage. I think they're engaged now,' he went on calmly.

5

In the midst of January cold, when the city had lain for weeks under a dirty icy crust, came a sudden thaw, which gave to the eaves of every house a festoon of icicles. The sun burned like midsummer. Then the sky turned white, and the snow came. It was unlike winter snows, soft, feathery, and deliberate in its descent. It began at night, and by the next afternoon every tree and shrub was covered with a lacy drapery, which gave Janet's sad little garden the serenity of a moonlight night.

When Keith returned from his afternoon lecture, they put on their moccasins and started out for Mendota Glen. As they crossed the bridge, islands of ice sailed through the water. The squatters' houses along the banks, with the little Polish church, had the diminutive charm of a secluded European village clustering around its church spire. All the filth and corruption of a city befouled by its inhabitants had miraculously disappeared. The snow still came down in fitful tufts that clung to coat and gloves like tiny snowballs.

The two plodded up the hill on the other side of the river, past the mobs of boys and girls coasting in the street, and finally along the boulevard leading to the glen. In Mendota Park the popcorn booths, the mechanical pianos and radios, the swings, the chattering Scandinavian picnickers of the summer were gone. Not a human sound disturbed the illusion of a forest, full of silent trees, their snow-covered trunks and branches taking on the aloof calm of sculpture.

At the entrance to the glen Janet noticed a car parked a little distance up the road, and tracks, almost obliterated by the continuous fall of snow, leading into it.

'What a nuisance! I hoped we'd have the place all to ourselves.'

In the glen, with steep, tree-covered slopes on both sides and a creek tinkling under its white covering, they entered a passage roofed over by the locked branches of trees. They paused with every few steps to look up at the white sky, the black line of the tree-trunks, the grey patches of creek bursting out here and there. They heard only the hoarse chirp of a chilly little bird under the shrubbery and the occasional murmur of water. They stopped talking. Janet felt the tenseness go out of her, the strain; she stopped thinking. A fish secure for an instant from its enemies and not searching for food floats lazily in a sun-flecked pool. A bird drifting through blue spaces feels the rush of air, the warmth of sun, and gives itself up to a moment of well-being. So these two, man and woman, walked hand in hand, surrendered themselves to quiet.

The path turned sharply, as the creek rushed toward the river. They walked with heads down, the snow now full in their faces. Suddenly Janet looked up. A few yards distant in a shelter of firs stood two people, their faces turned the other way. They seemed at first almost like trees, so motionless and silent, their clothing dusted over with snow. Then the man stirred, held the girl in a long embrace. Janet put her hand on Keith's arm. He saw. They fled swiftly. The lovers were Pierce and Barbara.

Of course, if the Lamberton's had been ordinary people, they would have recognized Barbara's car. But one automobile is like another, so Janet excused herself, to those who never aspire to own one.

'Didn't I tell you?' Keith burst out at last, after an eloquent battery of punches all the way back to the road. 'Any one could have guessed. It was inevitable from the start. You ought to have seen that, Janet.'

Janet made no reply. She couldn't get rid of the queer ache in her throat, the mixture of pain and pleasure in her heart. Love was sad. It made one that much the more a victim of

fortune; made one suffer for two instead of for one. Barbara had looked so fragile standing there in the glen, like the grasses swaying under their fluff of snow.

She looked up at Keith, with his mocking grin and tender eyes. With the shameless confidence of a wife she let him kiss her there on the open road before they trotted home to supper.

6

The lovers came slowly out of the grey glen. They took a few steps, paused, embraced. Their lips met. Barbara, shaken by first love, would have sunk into the snow if Pierce's arm had not held her up. The discovery that life held such ecstasy overpowered one at first.

'Ah,' breathed Pierce, 'I was never happy before. But I didn't know.' He kissed her again.

'And poor me — is it poor me that makes all the difference?' She shook her head.

'I was getting bitter. Yes, darling, I was. I can see it now. But with you — I've almost decided to stop hating the world.'

'You were very grand. I was afraid of you. Perhaps I'm still — just a bit afraid of you. Just a little bit,' she added, laughing.

He pressed her fiercely against him, kissed her eyes, her lips. They stood in a lingering embrace, then stumbled on toward Barbara's snow-covered car.

CHAPTER XIV

LOVE AND MARY GIDDINGS

1

As Mary opened her office door, Winthrop Eliot brushed past her, and bounded down the steps as if pursued by an enemy. This was his last day at Chippewa. Immediately after his lecture he was escaping the farewells of his colleagues. As he plunged past her, Mary had been conscious of a tense, pained face.

'Poor man,' thought Mary. 'I shall never see him again.' Of course she had never seen much of him. He wasn't her kind. Not many of the men in the English department were. But now, in spite of the fact that during four years his eyes had gazed steadfastly at a point a few inches above her head when they passed each other, she pitied him. She felt that he didn't want to leave Chippewa, didn't want to sell bonds. 'Poor man,' she sighed again. He had been defeated by forces too great for him — his wife, the trifling society of Saint Anthony, his own need of money. Winthrop Eliot in ten years — ten years of selling bonds — if she should see him again —— But she would never see him again. What was more, she didn't want to see him after ten years.

At the door of the English office she confronted Professor Masters accompanied by a stranger.

'Ah, Miss Giddings,' he began, 'may I present Mr. Nevins? He's just come.'

Mr. Nevins's promptness in appearing at the moment when she was delivering a mental valedictory to his predecessor gave her a rude start. She stared at him without saying a word. The new instructor was of the aesthetic type;

tall, well set-up, wearing a lavender shirt and purple necktie to bring out the tones of his dark reddish hair. His arrogant chin and correct nose had the familiar stamp of beauty that stares from bill-boards and street-car advertisements.

'I hope you will be very good to me, Miss Giddings, and show me the ropes,' implored the new young man.

Mary untwisted the frown from her face. 'I suppose I'll have to. I've shown more than one man his way around Chippewa.'

'Thanks very much. I'm greatly relieved.' He smiled and hurried away with his chief.

Another of those conceited young men. The kind that expected you to make everything easy for them, by explaining what they ought to find out for themselves. For years cub instructors had hung on to Mary's skirts and implored her to guide their first faltering steps, driven her mad with their silly questions. Well this one would be fooled if he expected her to make a fuss over him. Let him worry through things the best he could. She wasn't going to trouble herself over any more of those green young men. They got paid as much as she. Fools — ignorant fools that they were. Promptly Mary dismissed Mr. Nevins from her mind, and planned that she would allow herself a fifteen-minute nap before she began typing on her thesis. An hour of solid work before dinner. That was good.

As she opened the Lamberton front door, she saw Barbara Emerson sitting on the sofa beside Janet. She waved, and started to go upstairs. Barbara flew toward her.

'Mary ——' She caught her arm. 'We've got something to tell you. Wait a minute.'

Barbara led her into the living-room. Pierce came toward her, shook her hand. Janet was laughing.

'Well,' Mary called out, 'what's the matter?' She stared first at one, then at the other. Then all three laughed. Barbara whispered something. 'Oh!' said Mary. Barbara pulled led her over to the sofa between her and Janet.

'Are you awfully surprised?' Barbara demanded.

People always expected you to say something when they got engaged; that it was wonderful, that life was just beginning, that everybody needed marriage. But Mary could never say any of these things. She didn't believe them. She gulped, and then tried to express some pleasantly appropriate sentiment.

'I hope you'll be very happy,' she blurted out in a husky voice.

Barbara pressed her hand. Then she and Pierce laughed again. Everything seemed to make them laugh.

'We want to be — we expect to live in that delightful state to which you refer,' Pierce replied. 'At last we are happy now.'

Mary, with a lump in her throat, could not look at Barbara. While Janet was chattering away about how wonderful, how perfectly wonderful it all was, Mary with difficulty kept her seat.

When she was afraid she couldn't stand it any longer, Pierce announced that they were motoring out to the Country Club for dinner, and must be moving along. Once it was Pierce that was always running off places. Now they'd both go.

'Why,' Mary demanded when she and Janet were left alone, 'why couldn't you have stopped it?' She no longer felt like crying. She was indignant, indignant mainly at Janet, who hadn't wanted to stop it. Janet wanted everybody marrying, everybody. She was foolishly romantic. Making a faculty lady out of Barbara! 'That lovely girl,' she added, feeling more and more angry inside.

Janet looked arch. 'Perhaps I didn't want to stop it, my dear. Or perhaps I know you can't stop such things.'

Mary held her lips tightly together. Of course she wanted Barbara to be happy. She dared not brush away the tears in her eyes for fear Janet would see.

But Janet did see, and abruptly talked of something else, of her Valentine bridge party, to which she had invited the new young man, Murray Nevins.

'Pierce asked me to invite him,' Janet explained.

'He looks as if he'd like such things.'

'Pierce says he's a fresh variety of Masters importation — born in California, educated at Princeton, and already longing for Paris.'

'I suppose he would. He looks dashing. But Masters's men are dashing. Poor Eliot most of all.'

Janet's mind did not grasp the pity of Winthrop Eliot. She was all for the stranger.

'Whom are you going to marry off this Nevins to, Janet?' Mary was still angry at her match-making friend.

Janet smiled. 'To you, possibly, Mary. That would be a real feat of management.'

Mary, with a terrible look, got up from the sofa abruptly, and muttered something about having typing to do. In her attic retreat she began pounding on her typewriter with a fury that ought to have driven Pierce and Barbara from her thoughts. But it didn't.

Janet, sitting alone in the shadows of late afternoon watching the campus lamps across the way come on with a sudden glow, rejoiced over the engagement of her friends, who were unlike all other lovers. That afternoon, before Mary had come in to break the spell of their gaiety, they had been making up humorous accounts of the difficulties of an engagement between a member of the faculty and a girl living in a sorority house. Pierce had genius for inventing fantastic experiences; Barbara followed him closely. It was a terrible business, they confessed to her now. But somehow they had managed. Pierce related the nice calculations he had made all that fall as to how often he could come to tea without exciting suspicion. Keith's book had been a Godsend. He would venerate that immortal work forever. Few books had as much to their credit. Well, they'd carried it through somehow, and freed themselves from the indefinite and shameful condition of being in love, which must be hidden from the world, by getting decently engaged at last.

'Didn't you suspect Pierce's disappearances when he drove

off to Wenonah with me every week-end?' Barbara asked Janet.

'Where would one go for a week-end around Saint Anthony?' Pierce inquired. 'It just couldn't be done without an ulterior motive.'

'And his being gone every night,' Barbara continued.

'Of course he didn't always stay at home last year,' Janet informed her, giving Pierce an eloquent look.

For all their mockery, Janet had not been deceived about their happiness. It burst from them everywhere, especially from Barbara, whose eyes continued to wonder at the miracle which had come to her. As Janet regarded them, she had lived over the memory of her own engagement, experiencing piece by piece that vivid part of life when nothing serious interrupts continuous sunshine. What lovers ever contemplated the future with caution, timidity, fear? Even with common-sense? If they did, there would be few marriages. Love and practicality — Janet's fancies made a sad little turn — what she herself joined now in her life — there was time for that after marriage. Barbara, living in mist and dreams, giving herself up to poetry — Janet had beatings of wistful envy of Barbara. Had she, like Barbara, even in the swift weeks of her engagement, freed herself utterly from care and a sordid world? No. Even then, she had been mostly prose. And now ——

2

Barbara, in a red gown which gave her the appearance of a glorious valentine, was talking to Mr. Nevins at Janet's bridge party. At least she was letting him talk. He was in the midst of a tragic tale of collision with his landlady. To dispel the homesickness which settled upon him as soon as he arrived at Chippewa, he had rented a piano and had begun to play Wagner. At the end of a good crashing passage, when he was feeling almost cheerful again, he was conscious of a steady pounding under his feet. It kept up, became louder as soon as he started again. He persisted. So did the noise.

'I've had landladies before,' he said. 'I'm familiar with their favorite weapon, the broomstick. The good woman was beating it against her ceiling. She didn't like Wagner.'

'How dreadful,' Barbara responded a little belatedly.

That day he had it out with the landlady. He intended to continue playing Wagner — a great master. Too loud sometimes, the woman objected. Never too loud, he had contradicted her, only powerful. Couldn't he play his music more quiet? That wouldn't be Wagner, he informed her. Great swelling oceans of sound. Let them roll. Any further broomhandle demonstrations and she lost a lodger. Barbara smiled absent-mindedly upon the young man, her eyes travelling swiftly toward Pierce across the room and then back to Mr. Nevins.

Nevins advanced from Barbara to Mary, his partner at the first table of bridge. She wore a black gown with touches of white that looked like half-mourning. In spite of the fact that black intensified her sallow complexion and bony frame, she approved of it because a black dress could be given good, steady wear. She didn't intend to waste her money on clothes.

Nevins was inquiring ironically how she had learned to tolerate Chippewa.

'I don't intend to go through the pretence of liking it,' he announced, looking at her with playful defiance.

She raised her honest eyes. 'I belong to Chippewa,' she stated proudly. 'I was born on a farm in this State, and I love it.'

'Even in winter?' he questioned.

In spite of this inauspicious beginning, they got on very well when they settled down to their first game of bridge. Mary's one enthusiasm, apart from an engrossing profession, was this popular pastime. It took her mind off her work, she said. To-night luck was with her, and an excellent partner. They carried everything before them at the first table, again at the second. When they parted, it was with excessive compliments on both sides.

'That man plays cards,' Mary informed Pierce, her next partner.

'Let's hope you can say the same for me.'

At the adjoining table Mrs. Chamberlain was playing bridge with a reckless abandon that made her a strong competitor of Mr. Nevins. Mary regarded her with approval. The nursery school was giving her a second youth. She had recently acquired a boyish bob which harmonized with her erect figure and clear-cut profile. The coquettish manner she adopted toward an animated gentleman like Mr. Nevins had no hint of the three babies sleeping safely at home, a student left on guard.

'Just look at Mrs. Chamberlain,' Mary commanded Pierce. 'She's going off with her husband on his sabbatical leave next year. Did Janet tell you? It's all due to Mrs. Harris.'

'Don't you think that I ought to warn Mr. Nevins that she has a husband here? Right away — before it's too late ——'

Mary gave him a crushing glance. 'I guess Mr. Nevins can look out for himself.'

'Well — if you think so.'

Another couple joined them, and Pierce had to keep silent.

'Mary's going on terribly about Nevins's bridge-playing,' Pierce informed Janet during a shifting of tables. 'She compared me with him several times — not to my advantage. I wouldn't be surprised if she were strangely taken with him.'

Barbara had drifted toward them. 'Isn't he silly? Pierce thinks of all the world in pairs now. Poor Miss Giddings.'

3

The new instructor proved to be a great nuisance. The number of times he invaded Mary's office defied calculation. She scowled at him, went on reading papers, advised him to try using his own judgment a little. But no matter. He came in just the same. He had never taught before, he reminded her when she became openly contemptuous. He hated Chippewa, everything about Chippewa. He hated teaching. He begged Miss Giddings to get him started. He couldn't let

any of the men know what a mess he was in. At this Mary opened her eyes wide.

Fortunately for him, he put on no masculine airs, at least not at the start. Something about him mollified Mary's scorn. He was so completely in her hands. Gradually she softened her fierce speeches.

Janet, looking out of the window one afternoon, saw Mary standing in front of the house talking to Nevins. She could hear his frequent laughter. Evidently he found Mary amusing — or himself. A few days later he again accompanied her home. This time Janet called them in to tea. He talked steadily, inspired by his first hearing of the Saint Anthony Orchestra. It was all simply abominable — conductor, program, players. He was asking Miss Giddings to the next concert to confirm his judgment. Mary, as a critic of the arts, appeared to Janet in a new function. He inquired about the little theatre movement in Saint Anthony. Now in San Francisco ——

'It waxes and wanes here,' Janet told him. 'This happens to be an off year.'

'I'll start a theatre,' he announced. 'Right on the campus, I must start something.'

'Do you often start things?' Mary inquired solemnly. 'I thought you were going to start a bridge club.'

'I do nothing but start things,' he laughed. 'The more the better.'

Meanwhile Mary advised Mr. Nevins, advised him in greater quantity than she had ever advised any young man before, allowed him to walk home with her from class, accompanied him to more symphony concerts, and to the exhibition of Norwegian painters at the Public Library. She had long loved music without knowing anything about it. There were some things you learned being born on a Chippewa farm, and other things you didn't. Music for you was the call of meadow-larks over brown fields, the jubilation of song sparrows announcing spring, the steady piping of robins before a summer rain. You learned poetry from the passing of the year, from fields quickening with sprouting

wheat, silver-green in June, gold in harvest, blue-black in ploughed furrows. You learned hard work; its pain, its sweetness, its beauty. You learned how to take care of a sick horse, sat up all night in a freezing barn with the helpless animal, shed foolish tears when it got better. You held baby lambs in your arms, looked after newly weaned calves. But you learned nothing of the construction of a symphony, couldn't tell an English horn from an oboë, a trombone from a trumpet, never heard of a bassoon except in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' and fancied it, until informed better by Murray Nevins, an obsolete instrument. When Pierce and Keith talked about form and design in painting, Mary had nothing to say. Murray Nevins knew all these things. He convinced her of their importance. She told him how to manage Chippewa students, and he instructed her about music, painting, sculpture, architecture. He suggested that she was a fearfully ignorant person, and they'd have to start at the bottom of the arts. So they began.

Mary was profoundly grateful. Perhaps most of all for Mr. Nevins's interest in Crabbe. It was a weary business always working alone. Once she had talked to Janet — in the days when both of them were writing books. Their conversation at breakfast, luncheon, dinner was an eternal duet of Crabbe and Shaftesbury, Shaftesbury and Crabbe. But now it was Keith — Keith — Keith until Mary wanted to choke her tiresome friend. Keith and his book — of nothing but that did Janet think. When Mary had tried reading a completed chapter of her book to Janet, she had looked up in time to catch her absent eyes fixed upon the street. She stopped abruptly. 'Good — it's very good,' Janet had answered lamely, trapped in the midst of a chapter. Keith was always interested when Mary visited his office. He gave her any amount of time and detailed criticism. But she couldn't bear to interrupt him now that he was trying to finish his book. Mr. Nevins fortunately admired Crabbe. He listened to Mary's chapters, criticised them intelligently, embarked on the long Crabbe discourses which Mary loved.

Mary, typing in her attic late at night, decided that there was satisfaction to be derived from friendship with a man. She had helped Mr. Nevins, but he had helped her more. She congratulated herself on the fact that she was the kind of woman who could be a man's friend. 'No voluptuous curves about *me*,' she said aloud, catching a glimpse of her spare figure in the mirror on the opposite wall. If she kept going, she'd finish her book before Keith. A good joke on Janet, also typing away in her bedroom. In the quiet house Mary could hear the faint clicks from below accompanying her louder sounds.

It was ridiculous for Janet to be doing that kind of work. Why not hire Keith's book typed? Mary had heard from Mrs. Harris of Janet's summary rejection of a good job in the new occupational bureau for the wifely duty of performing slave labor. Not that Keith wanted her to. It was all Janet's fault. Making a mess of herself — in a little over a year — caring for nothing but the doings of a man — meddling in his work. Why couldn't she let him alone? Earn a good salary? An excellent offer like that. With a job she'd develop interests of her own, stop being a drag on her husband. Little different from Angela Eliot. Couldn't Janet see that she was just like the others — a mere wife — a faculty lady? Mary typed faster than ever. But Janet was — yes, she *was* just a faculty lady.

In her bedroom downstairs Janet labored over Keith's manuscript. She heard Mary thumping at breakneck speed above her head. How could she go on that way after a heavy day of teaching? Janet's eyes burned, her neck ached. Late at night she made frequent mistakes. Sometimes she tried to convince herself that she liked typing. The delicious monotony of it — the beautiful pages floating from under one's hands. But to-night she knew she loathed it. She paused, her fingers lingering over the keys. What was it that made women work for men, forget their own interests, absorb themselves in the life of another? That was what had happened to her, to Barbara. But Mary — Janet sighed. She

didn't want Mary to like this new young man too well. He was a puny piece of civilization that could be duplicated almost anywhere. Mary — the unique, the individualist, the only woman Janet had felt sure wouldn't crumple up before the burning power of man.

Why did she feel this way? Perhaps even Mary — by herself — was not completely satisfied.

There was that fatal maternal instinct of Mary's. She was always mothering somebody, Janet herself in the days when they had roomed in the same house. A succession of lame ducks — her students, the stupid, the clever, it didn't seem to matter. Helen Atkins — Barbara. If she thought people needed her, she rushed to their aid. Now it was this weak young man. At least he seemed weak — hanging around a woman all the time, a woman older than he, far from pretty, and brutally frank sometimes.

But these fatal human attractions — one couldn't account for them — even in a woman like Mary.

Janet began to pound the keys once more.

4

Janet called Mary down from her attic to join a tiresome group of young matrons who sewed, darned stockings, and talked about their husbands. Didn't Janet know that married women move in one tight little groove, spinsters in another, and there's no use trying to mix them? No escape, though. She'd get her darning done while the wives gabbled. So, with a big bag of mending under her arm, Mary stalked into the living-room.

Mrs. Colfax, who had just sat down, looked as if she were about to say something momentous. Mary's arrival brought a suspicious pause in her burst of talk.

'Is Clara coming this afternoon?' she inquired of Janet, her powerful voice subdued almost to a whisper.

'I think so. I asked her.'

A second time Mrs. Colfax glanced toward Mary with fur-

tive questioning. 'I suppose I ought to tell you before she gets here. You've heard about the Slaters?'

Mary envisioned a mild-voiced little woman in the registrar's office, who had a husband giving out silly interviews about Russia to the undergraduate reporters on the Chippewa News.

The wives shook their heads.

'Or that Russian girl?'

Once more they nodded absolute ignorance.

'I thought everybody'd know it by this time. The girl Slater was carrying on with last summer in Russia.'

Mary, threading her darning-needle, did not look up.

'Slater!' several of the others repeated after Lily Colfax.

'Imagine a man being such a fool as to go on like that right under the nose of a man in his own department. — Jim Drew was in the same party. He's let a word fall here and there. I guess he thought it was a joke at first; but it isn't.'

'You mean that Mr. Slater was flirting with some girl in the party? I thought they were all men — economists,' said Anna Montgomery.

'There were women, too,' corrected Lilly. 'But this one was their interpreter.'

'John Slater likes women — likes to talk with them. Why, he even talks to me.' Anna looked mischievously toward Lily.

'Now the girl's come over here. In New York. John spent Christmas with her. Clara said they couldn't afford his going to the National Association meeting, but he went. He and that woman — they even attended some of the sessions together. She looking like a gypsy fortune-teller — her hair sticking out all over like a bush. I always knew he was a rabbit for sense. But not that bad.'

'Perhaps she's interested in economics,' Mary suggested. It was hard to believe that a girl sat through long speeches on stiff economic subjects for love of John Slater. She had talked to him.

'And Clara slaving in the registrar's office through the heat to pay for that trip to Russia,' concluded Lily.

'Does she know?' Janet asked, thinking to herself that if such a tragedy had come to her, she would have died. What could she say to Clara?

'That's what I'd like to find out. If she doesn't — the minute she steps in here, we've got to start talking hard about something else.'

'What will she do?' Anna appealed to them. 'What can she do?'

'Of course she wasn't the wife for John. He makes fun of her religion, of all her ideas. She just takes it. It makes me boil. And then he grabs every penny she earns. She's slaved ever since she came here.'

Mary gathered together a big hole in the heel of a stocking with several large, firm stitches. This was what happened — inevitably happened when a woman turned herself into a doormat. Mrs. Slater looked like one of those self-sacrificing martyrs. Mary, paying graduate fees, had always resented the genteel voice and skinny little hands of that woman at the window. 'It must be nice taking all those studies,' Mrs. Slater had remarked to her once. *Nice.* Mary made a fierce pull at her thread. Nice.

'I told Harold that if he——' Lily's threatening voice hovered on the chasm of unutterable threats directed toward Harold.

'What's that Russian woman doing in New York?' Janet inquired.

'Agitating bolshevism or feminism. Both, maybe. She's talking everywhere. Quite the rage.' Lily drew a deep breath to start a new flight. 'As I told Harold, the trouble with most academic men is that they've known mostly tame women. When one of the other kind comes along, they get bowled right over.'

Mary laughed grimly. That Colfax woman saw things as they were.

'Even Harold — he likes to talk about the one high-flying

girl he's known. When Chippewa gets duller'n an old dog, he cheers himself up by hinting to me how gay he could have been with Flossy if he'd taken half a chance. "Why didn't you marry Flossy?" I ask him, "Then she could do your typewriting for you." She wouldn't and he knows it.'

'Why, Lily!' protested Anna Montgomery.

'It's hard enough to love even a good man all the time,' Lily plunged on. 'They're so silly. When Harold starts in with his Flossy, he gets such a Don Juan look on his face.'

Lily's friends laughed. A Don Juan expression certainly didn't do any harm. A man must have some indulgence.

'Is it easy for a *man* to love a woman all the time?' Anna charged Lily. 'We're exasperating. At least I am. I've been guilty of gloating over my youthful love affairs before my faithful Robert. Bankers, dentists making twenty thousand a year, real-estate boomers who almost died for love of me.'

'I'm glad you do, Anna Montgomery. It's what they need, the best of them,' Lily applauded. 'Make them see they're not the only ones.'

Mrs. Slater arrived a few minutes after five. At the sound of the doorbell, Mary gathered her stockings into their bag and stammered out that she had to get back to work. She couldn't stay in the same room with that poor woman. Why didn't she fight more? Why didn't all women?

Clara hadn't brought her sewing. She was too tired. She was content to sit quiet and enjoy tea and listen to the others. Lily, whose mind made slow adjustments, now had nothing to say. She pulled her needle in and out of Harold's sock with absorbed energy, her naturally high-colored face even redder than usual. Fortunately Anna began to talk animatedly about the last symphony concert. She and Robert had a ticket between them. This had been her turn.

'By the way, Janet, I saw your friend Miss Giddings there with a handsome young man. They looked so amusing together.'

One couldn't guess what feeling was hidden behind Mrs. Slatter's bleak, brown face. If John Slater had imposed on

her, she herself was partly to blame. She had permitted herself to look and become dull. Her back, head, the twist of her hair, her voice bespoke a resignation which would drive even a naturally cautious man to a fiery Russian girl shrieking revolution.

All that hard work — that drudgery in the registrar's office — sacrifice for something she didn't understand. And for what? It wasn't as if John were really worth the effort, like Anna's or Helen's husband. His book, which he frequently discussed with Keith — for some reason he considered Keith an authority on Russian affairs, much to his embarrassment — resembled its erratic, muddle-headed, sentimental author. No one had a good word to say for it. Just an utter mess, Pierce said. Pierce despised Slater. But then he despised most people.

5

Mrs. Slater continued to drink tea every week with the Better Halves of Wisdom. She, like the others, often darned her husband's socks. How could she? demanded Lily Colfax, who had to fight against the impulse to tear away those branded articles of apparel from a deceived wife's hands. One afternoon, Mrs. Slater came very late. When the others left, she remained. She sat in a chair near the window watching her three friends out of sight.

'I suppose they think I don't know,' she said to Janet. 'Well, I do. I've known all along. John told me.' She waited a moment. 'I'm asking a favor of you. I made up my mind I would. I walked and walked after I left the office to-day making myself come and tell you. Your husband's the only man here at Chippewa John looks up to. He thinks he knows everything. If he'd tell — tell him it wouldn't do. That he'd lose his position here if he did. You see he wants to marry her — to get a divorce. I've told him you can't do those things in a university — that no one at Chippewa —— There are no divorced people here, are they?'

'I can't think of any.'

'That's what I told him. It'd get out in the papers. They wouldn't keep him. He's got to face that happening. That's what I said.'

'You want Keith to tell him that?'

'Yes, tell him it wouldn't do.'

'It's difficult — interfering with another person. But I'll ask him.'

Mrs. Slater lifted her eyes calmly to regard Janet. Her voice was controlled. She seemed unmoved. She went on to assure her that John would get over this. Once before, when they were first married and he was finishing up his college work, there had been a girl.

'We got married before he graduated,' she explained. 'I did bookkeeping for a grain firm then. She was in his class.'

She knew better than any one else what John wanted. Now his book was almost done, he'd get his Doctor's degree in June, and his promotion in another year. Then they'd buy a little house in that new section they were opening up near Mendota Glen. 'Such pretty yards,' she said. 'Oaks and elms — big trees — already there.'

Her face was aglow with plans for a home of her own. Because happiness for her lay in an uneventful domesticity, she was convinced John, too, would be satisfied in the same way. Dotted swiss curtains at all the windows. Lilac bushes, a syringa bush, roses. Janet could see the little place as it lived in Clara's imagination.

'If Mr. Lamberton could only show him,' breathed Clara. 'He'll get over the idea. He did before.'

Janet promised once more that she would present the matter to Keith.

Keith, however, refused to interfere with John Slater. He seemed to despise him even more than Pierce did. A hound, Keith called him. A sneak. Exploiting his wife that way. But he agreed to talk with the head of Slater's department.

Professor Jones, an elderly man soon to retire after almost forty years of steady teaching, was already familiar with Slater's infatuation for an exotic Russian woman. But

it was time he took that young man aside and gave him some plain talk. He'd give Slater some straight talk to-morrow. The 'Chippewa Press' was publishing Slater's book. It wasn't good for much. All that was valuable in it had probably come from that Russian woman, who seemed to be intelligent about her own country. Jones and his colleagues had already decided Slater wasn't worth keeping. Second-rate — decidedly second-rate. If he promised to behave himself, they'd keep him on as an instructor until he could get a job in one of the smaller colleges. If he didn't, they'd send him packing in June.

The next week Clara didn't meet with the others.

'She knows,' Mary said when Janet reported her absence. 'She won't come any more.'

Strangely enough, Mary was right. When Clara met Janet on the street, she passed with a chilly little nod. After exposing her poor naked self to another woman, she never wanted to see her again.

6

Every one was talking about the Slater's affairs.

Mrs. Porter in the vegetable market paused in a decision between old and new potatoes to whisper to Janet. 'Does the poor Slater woman know about that husband of hers? Somebody ought to tell her.' Mrs. Porter, with a husband whose great passion was a new telescope, had a look of pity.

From the Slaters gossip passed on to Mary Giddings. At the last meeting of the Faculty Wives' Club, which Janet attended with Mrs. Chamberlain, Mrs. Witherspoon, passing tea-cups, had remarked mischieviously: 'Every one at your house seems to be developing romantic tendencies this winter, Mrs. Lamberton. Is it your influence? Mr. Nevins is charming, isn't he? — and writes awfully clever stuff.'

So it went, back and forth, the Chippewa colony of women vacillating between the tragic situation of Clara Slater and the amusing fate of the defiant Miss Giddings caught at last. Love — love — the relations of men and women, that

immortal theme of gossip and art. No one will ever let it alone.

Even Pierce believed, or pretended to believe, that Mary was enslaved by love.

'It's his beauty that's doomed to vanquish her,' he announced sententiously to Janet. 'It'll be Beauty and the Beast reversed, those two.'

'Mary isn't ugly. She may not be a man's dream of beauty.'

'She's a fine woman. But as an inspiration for sonnets —— When Nevins isn't playing his piano, he's sonneteering or lyricising something.'

'The poor man's lonely,' Janet insisted.

'You're mistaken there. Witherspoon's crazy about him, and Mrs. Witherspoon, too. He's going to read something or other at the next Saturday literary evening. And he's already playing duets with Field. A rare combination of talents in that man. Why, he's even chummy with the immortal Insigne. Yet with all that, he seeks out Miss Giddings.'

'He's everything she dislikes — æsthetic — conceited — sentimental.'

'A bad omen — a very bad omen,' Pierce wagged his head. 'And I doubt if he's got a penny to marry on. Unless Mary's one of those energetic modern women who wants a husband to support, the course of their love won't run smooth.'

At the next Faculty Club dance Mr. Nevins brought Mary, and danced with her most of the evening. Mary's dancing wasn't equal to her bridge. Pierce with Barbara, wheeling past Janet, grinned, his eyes full of prophecy.

CHAPTER XV

MARCH WINDS

1

VIEWING Senator Emerson for the first time in the chaste lobby of the Chippewa Club, Janet marvelled, as people illogically insist upon doing, at the ill-assortment of parents and children. He was of medium height, large-necked, beginning to expand beyond the measure of his dinner coat. His hair, his face, his hands, even his eyes, had an unpleasant gloss which gave the impression of high living and comfort at the expense of the sterner virtues. Beside him stood Barbara, dressed in a white frock of clinging material, the neck edged with white fur, a silver rope knotted loosely as a sash.

Senator Emerson had long wanted to meet his daughter's kind friends. But he had just come through an exhausting legislative session. He had seized this first opportunity to ask them to dine with him at the Chippewa Club.

'It's about time I got acquainted with a few of you professors,' he said, shaking hands with Keith.

Keith looked at him hard. 'Are we the first you've known?'

'Well, maybe. I can't remember any.'

The Chippewa Club, the most exclusive institution in Saint Anthony, unlike the Athletic Club, restricted its membership to those men considered really important in social and professional circles. Professor Masters was the only University representative; even President Taylor, for reasons unknown, was not a member. Senator Emerson, however, because of his recent appointment to the Board of University Regents, had evidently decided to mend his ways. He gave his future son-in-law a playful pat. 'I suppose I'll have to be seeing considerable of this young gentleman now.'

Barbara was watching the men and women filing past them and up the stairs to the dining-room. From time to time she smiled absent-mindedly at Janet.

'I trust it won't be too hard on you,' Pierce returned. 'It's our fond delusion that we're not entirely unlike other men.'

The Senator laughed. 'Well, let's eat'. He pulled down his tight coat. 'What d'you say to that?'

Seated at a table upstairs, their host, after a preliminary cocktail, referred directly to his new duties as Regent, which evidently weighed upon him.

'It's breaking in new soil for me, by George,' he said, examining his carefully manicured hands. 'I'll have to get Barbara to tell me what to do. Eh, daughter? How about it?'

'I'll do what I can.' She smiled at him.

So far Barbara had said almost nothing. The unrelieved white of her gown made her look lovely, but somewhat fragile. Girls shouldn't resemble lilies, the poets notwithstanding.

'The first thing, I suppose, is to pay all you chaps more. Get a big appropriation that'll go for salary checks.' His darting eyes behind tortoise-rimmed spectacles gleamed over this little pleasantry. 'How'd that strike you, Lamberton?' He paused to order a second round of cocktails. 'All right?' he inquired, referring to each of his guests concerning his liquor, before Keith could reply.

Keith's face stiffened. 'I've never directed University appropriations before. I'm afraid I don't know much about it.'

The Senator drained a second glass before he began his soup. 'Isn't that what the University is always howling over? Underpaid teachers. I've heard enough about it. How much they paying you fellows now?'

At his question Barbara turned crimson, then pale. Keith looked down at his plate.

'Our honorable stipends are too niggardly to be mentioned at a gentleman's table,' laughed Pierce. 'I don't want to embarrass you, Mr. Emerson.'

Emerson threw back his head and laughed. 'As bad as that? Well, I'd better get busy.'

From that moment Pierce took charge of the conversation, which he kept in his capable hands through the rest of the dinner. Janet was proud of the way she assisted him. Even Keith managed better than usual. They made a supreme effort for Barbara's sake. Through one course after another she sat, her face white and drawn, picking aimlessly at her food, eating almost nothing. When she spoke, it was in a hoarse whisper.

'You got a cold, daughter?' her father asked her. One could see he was devoted to his only child. 'I guess this young man's been making things too exciting for my girl,' he confided to Janet. 'She's not extra strong. Never was from a little chick. And easily excited for all she looks so quiet.'

The dinner was delicious. Pierce assured his prospective father-in-law that the food and the wine were the most civilized he had enjoyed in a long time.

'Almost as good as your dinner for the French professor,' he added in Janet's ear.

'I'm going to put up your name here,' Senator Emerson returned to Pierce in a tone measuredly confidential. 'It isn't a bad place to hang out. Not half bad.'

After dinner they sat in a big room panelled with dark oak; the lights, the furnishings properly subdued. At one end was a fireplace with seats around it. Barbara looked into the fire, the flames casting yellow shadows over her white dress and making a glow of her hair. Janet sat down beside her. Senator Emerson lighted a cigar. He probably exercised in the club gymnasium every day, one guessed from the conscious erectness of his shoulders, the stiff posture of his head. Keith and Pierce, lounging against the fireplace, brought out cigarettes.

'Yes, perhaps I *am* a little tired,' Barbara admitted to Janet's question. She continued staring into the fire. 'There's something I want to talk over with you,' she murmured, taking Janet's hand in hers. 'I want your advice.' She smiled reassuringly. 'It's just a silly trifle — but you — I want you to know.'

'Come in to-morrow — any time.'

Barbara looked toward Pierce, then at her father, now talking to Keith. 'If I can,' she hesitated.

Pierce sat down on a sofa beside them. Janet released Barbara's hand, turned away, rose deliberately, and began to converse with Senator Emerson. She started him on politics, what the last legislature had done. She heard Barbara's low laugh behind her, Pierce's voice now and then. She kept the Senator going by nodding at intervals, and looking up at him reverently. Keith was pacing up and down the long room, his eyes on the floor. His last chapter — this was a good time to get it neatly arranged in his mind.

'Yes, yes,' Janet heard herself say at each pause in the Senator's remarks. 'It's very interesting. I'm so glad to talk to a man who actually knows these things.' He went on and on, his alert eyes measuring the diminutive young person in the orange velvet gown gracefully poised before him. There were times when it was an advantage for a woman not to be plain. A smiling Janet urged him to proceed. Barbara laughed again. The fitful murmur of words behind Janet continued. 'We hear too little talk of politics,' lamented the guileful wife of a Chippewa professor, permitting a smile to travel up toward the new University Regent. 'Altogether too little.'

Keith had reached the opposite end of the room. A large, dignified gentleman with a VanDyke beard covering part of a red face was coming down from the dining-room. Keith, conscious of his presence too late, apologized, backed off, and then began to pace slowly toward Janet and Senator Emerson. A strange man — Senator Emerson. At least strange to be holding the purse-strings of a University. Keith had never met a Regent before. Their minds — he reflected for a moment on the inexplicable mental process of a man like Senator Emerson. Suddenly he was conscious of a large satin shoe in his direct path, shining square buckles. He made an adroit detour around a majestic lady crossing the floor in front of him.

Why not invite Senator Emerson to hear the reading of the

last chapter of his book, that irritating conclusion now drifting through his mind? He'd suggest it to Janet. Here was the man who ruled Chippewa. It was his opinion that counted. Eighteenth-century civilization — let the Senator measure its value in dollars and cents. Keith dramatized the Senator sitting in one of the creaking wicker chairs. 'What's that man talking about? Sounds queer to me. I won't raise his salary. Not a penny.' Or perhaps within the legislator's mind — the Regent's mind — trickled the thought: 'Good work. He's the stuff. Boost him. He's worth double what you're paying.'

Keith rejoined the two standing in front of the fire. 'What is amusing you so much, dear?' Janet inquired.

'A chance idea.' Hastily dismissing his phantasms, he presented appropriate gravity before the maker of State laws.

Evidently Janet scented danger. 'I'm afraid we must be going,' she said, taking her husband's arm. 'It's been delightful talking to you,' she added, smiling brightly at her host, 'delightfully instructive.'

As she stood there chattering a gay conclusion to their talk, she reminded Keith of a graceful bird in orange plumage, a neat oriole, or one of the warblers he remembered in the Massachusetts fields of his childhood. Irresistible Janet. She had entertained that terrible man all evening. Barbara still sat on the sofa with Pierce, not conscious yet that her guests were going.

Senator Emerson called taxies, then stood out in the cold March wind to settle Janet and Keith in theirs with a flourish.

'We must let the young people have their chance,' he said, winking at Janet. 'It wouldn't do to send all of you over the river together.'

When they were started, Janet leaned back and closed her eyes. Before them floated the vision of Barbara in a white fur coat standing between her father and her fiancé. 'It seems almost too ironic, Pierce mixed up with a man like that,' she remarked as they sped through the quiet streets.

Keith made no reply. He was reflecting bitterly that it took only money to enable one man to insult another.

'Poor Pierce,' sighed Janet, 'and poor — poor Barbara.'

2

Barbara, dressed for a dance, knocked at Mary's door. Mary, as usual, was deep in work, her room in that cluttered state which its owner considered convenient. Mary herself in a ragged bathrobe, her hair standing up in untidy tufts where she had rubbed her hands through it, was as messy as her surroundings.

She looked up. 'Hello, there.'

'Shall I bother you? I wanted to talk a minute while I'm waiting for Pierce to bring the car up from the garage.'

Mary stretched her arms over her head and yawned. 'Good for *you*. I'm dog-tired.'

'You're always working.' Barbara lifted a pile of books from the most comfortable chair.

'Have to. No help for it. We can't all be pretty butterflies.'

Barbara leaned back in the easy chair. In a pink chiffon frock she reminded Mary of the apple orchard on the farm in early May. But when she looked a second time, she noticed traces of fatigue. Barbara ought to be going to bed instead of to a dance, thought Mary, forcing back the sound advice which rose instinctively to her lips. Barbara's voice sounded weary, even though she had such shining eyes. Pierce ought not to drag her everywhere the way he did.

'I didn't know you ever got tired, Miss Giddings. You seem so strong.'

'Well, I get sleepy, anyhow,' Mary admitted.

'You seem like a rock — as if nothing could break you. So sure of things.'

'Too sure, I guess.'

'But I like to think there is some one who is sure of things. Now I —— Sometimes I think I'm sure of nothing.'

'That's why people like you better than they do me.'

'What nonsense!'

'Yes, they do. You're not always forcing your ideas down people's throats.'

'It's because ideas don't mean so much to me.' Barbara sighed. 'I suppose I ought to care more. Sometimes I'm afraid I don't care for anything.'

'Except Pierce,' thought Mary. 'Aren't you feeling well?' she said aloud.

From below Pierce's voice interrupted them. Barbara rose suddenly, gave Mary a pat. 'Oh, yes,' she assured her. From her face the weariness had dropped like a grey veil, and she was the animated girl Mary generally saw.

'Coming — coming,' she called, her voice rising, her youth rushing triumphantly back as she hurried downstairs to join Pierce.

Mary stared after her. All nerves. Only a moment ago her face had appeared so strained. Was Barbara happy? It couldn't be easy to be engaged to a man of Pierce's fastidiousness, especially if one were young like Barbara and stretching — painfully stretching to reach his exacting standards. She ought to be cared for. Mary, roused suddenly to consciousness of this romantic softness toward Barbara, shook herself like a wet puppy. 'Idiot,' she said aloud to the thin face in the mirror. 'Idiot.' But within her lay a vague, frightened feeling.

3

Barbara, lying in the attic room of the sorority house next to the cook, shivered in her cold bed. She wished she could go to sleep. Last night she had slept almost none, and she was very tired. Downstairs, although it was past twelve, a victrola was still going. On the floor below girls were laughing and running up and down. Through the partition came the steady snores of Hannah, who dropped into a heavy sleep the moment she hit the bed.

Barbara tossed back and forth. Every muscle in her body ached. Her feet ached. Her toes ached. Her hands —— her fingers —— up and down passed that nervous tremor which

kept sleep away and brought sad thoughts. It was so queer. She couldn't understand it. A few weeks, even a few days ago, she had been so happy. Now she lay prostrate on the ground, great weights holding her down. She was tired, so very tired, and she couldn't sleep.

Perhaps if she had passed her childhood in a happy home, she wouldn't have such horrible thoughts. She knew how tragic marriage could be, two people living together, making each other wretched. From her earliest memories she had seen her mother in tears, in deep depression, then spending months at a sanitarium 'building up her nerves,' the doctor told Barbara. For her shattered health her mother blamed her father, mentioned 'other women,' neglect, cruelty, even accused her daughter of sympathizing with her father. He, as years went on, devoted more and more time to Saint Anthony; divided his life among his hotel suite, his club, the Legislature, and that great unknown, hidden from Barbara, but looming large in her mother's sick imagination.

If Pierce would only take her far away, far away from their quarrels, their cruel words — that had been her dream from the first day she knew he loved her. She had thought of nothing else, tried to think of nothing else. This unexpected, perfect joy. It surpassed her dreams, her hopes. And then, when had that awful fear, that dread invaded her elysian world?

She couldn't remember. One day a lightness, sweet, ecstatic, never known before, impossible to describe. The next day sudden terror, gloom, utter wretchedness.

'If I could only tell him,' she moaned, writhing in her bed.

Back in the remote shadows of earliest memory smiled a beautiful and charming young woman who was her mother. There were pictures of her that way. Barbara looked like her. But when she showed Pierce the photographs, he failed to notice any resemblance. Doubtless he saw only the fretful invalid, sallow-faced, her yellow hair, faded and mixed with gray, tortured into marcel waves, her shrunken body draped in elaborately stylish clothes, watched over by a nurse who

kept the key to the medicine chest in her apron pocket. He didn't want to acknowledge that his love was like such a woman. And Barbara herself ——

When had that sudden obsession taken hold of her? Barbara lay back on her pillow, staring up into the blackness above her bed. Perhaps it was because she, like her mother, had begun having such melancholy thoughts. Why they had come, from what cause, she did not know. But now that one fear kept charging up and down in her weary brain, beat against the top of her head, throbbed against her neck, down her backbone, stabbed her whole body with burning misery.

She was going like her mother — the same way — nerves — hallucinations ——

When that unaccountable depression seized her, she told Pierce she ought not to marry him. She wasn't good enough. The other thing — she couldn't tell him that. He had only laughed, taken her in his arms, held his face against hers.

'Oh, my darling,' she moaned aloud, 'I want you to be happy, very happy. Nothing else.' She pressed her face against her pillow and sobbed.

If she could only tell him the truth. Her fear of the future. But she couldn't. She hid it from every one, tried to appear light-hearted, to talk gaily, to laugh, laugh. How it hurt her to laugh! And no one seemed to notice any change in her, even though she lived with that terror in her heart. She couldn't eat. She couldn't sleep. Just that one thing all the time.

Somehow — she couldn't decide how she would accomplish it — she must make Pierce give her up, forget her, forget her as if she were dead. But how?

Now she must sleep. To-night she would sleep. To charm herself away into slumber, she thought of babies asleep, that beautiful, fragrant unconsciousness of mortal limitations unequalled by anything but the cold peace of death. She thought of rain, of fleecy white clouds, of swallows dipping through the air, of sail-boats on Bemidju Lake, of Pierce's first kiss that day in the snow, the flakes coming down so softly upon

the two of them. For an instant she swam in a warm sunny pool of peace and relaxation. Then she choked, came up, gasping, to the surface of tormenting realities. She mustn't think of all that. It belonged to the past which she must give up. How, she couldn't tell.

The cook snored away steadily on the other side of the wall. The girls downstairs were still shrieking, calling back and forth to one another. A door slammed. A pause. A breath of quiet.

'Oh, my darling,' Barbara cried out against her pillow, 'show me what to do!'

4

Barbara walked slowly across Mendota Bridge. She had been going back and forth since breakfast. In spite of classes, in spite of everything, she continued to pace the length of the bridge once, twice. She had long since lost count of the number of times. At the west side she stopped, leaned over the railing, and looked down at the river flats covered with rows of tiny houses. Heavy rains had swelled the waters of the Mississippi and caused them to spread over the banks and the houses nearest the shore. Their owners had taken refuge with their neighbors higher up the hill. Every spring they made a similar hasty flight, and as soon as the waters receded, moved back into the muddy welter of boards and mouldy furniture which was home. The 'Saint Anthony Gazette' published annual photographs of the flat-dwellers rowing about their flooded dwellings in hastily constructed barges and trying to recover the possessions which floated out of windows and doors. Saint Anthony citizens crowded the bridge and looked down upon their local Venice. No one ever seemed to get drowned. The Poles and Slovaks who lived down there took the floods cheerfully and also the contributions from the Red Cross. Troubles came. That was life. Saint Anthony considered the river flats and the flat-dwellers picturesque.

But studying sociology and economics at college changed

one's ideas about what was picturesque. Human misery — misery everywhere. Barbara watched a boat filled with passengers making its way between the houses and past the church with water up to its door. She had read accounts of neighborly charity, ruined homes, beds, chairs, tables, floating down the Mississippi.

That afternoon she and Pierce were motoring to Wenonah to spend the week-end with her mother. For three weeks they hadn't gone home, a fact reiterated again and again in the querulous, almost illegible letters which Mrs. Emerson dispatched daily to her absent daughter. Last night she had dined with her father, and in the midst of his noisy talk following too rapid a succession of cocktails he had suddenly looked at her in a changed, hopeless way and told her there was nothing left in life for him but her. And she, regarding him with sick loathing, had prayed that she might never see either of her parents again.

Once she had thought Pierce could save her. Now she knew he was helpless. If she married him, Pierce would struggle to have her all to himself; they would fight to hold part of her back. She tired, helpless, between them. Things were that way. Even if she had been different — strong like her father. One couldn't escape one's parents. All she could do was to save Pierce, give him up, not force him into a hateful intimacy with them.

There was only one way. He wouldn't give her up — wouldn't listen. The railing of the bridge was low. No one was in sight. A dash over the railing. She measured it once more.

But drowning gave other people so much trouble. She couldn't do it. There were always rescuers. Why? Water made a quiet grave. They risked their lives — dived down — down. No, she couldn't give people trouble. She walked back toward the University, buffeted by the gusts of March wind.

5

When Pierce returned to his office after his two-o'clock lecture, the telephone was ringing. He had heard it as he came down the hall. The sound irritated him. He was tempted to throw that black instrument of torture out of the window. He was nervous, tired. The prospect of a week-end in Wenonah made him feel ill-used by the world. Some one was telephoning him. Why couldn't they leave him alone? He took down the receiver with a jerk. A high, excited voice at the other end.

'I can't understand a word you are saying,' he protested.

The voice began all over. He caught several words. Something about Barbara. Very sick. At the sorority house. He was to come right away.

At the door of the Gamma Lambda house, when he put his hand up to his head, he discovered that he had run bareheaded through the streets. He was conscious of passing by a room full of people staring at him. He started up the steps; met some one on the landing. Mrs. Otis, the house chaperon.

'The doctor's here,' she whispered. 'I'm expecting the ambulance every minute.'

At the top of the stairs, she took his arm. Her face floated away from him.

'I must tell you — explain before you go up to her.'

He wanted to push her aside and rush on to Barbara's room on the third floor. He had objected to her living up in the top of the house by herself. Up there — all alone ——

'When she didn't come to lunch, I was worried,' Mrs. Otis continued hurriedly. 'She's always so careful about telling me if she's going to be away. I asked the girls. They hadn't any of them seen her at class. So I sent Hannah up. The door was locked. But Hannah heard —— '

'You mean —— ' Pierce had a flash of terrible divination. 'Let me go to her.'

He pushed past Mrs. Otis and ran up the stairs. When he opened the door, a doctor was bending over the bed. Bar-

bara's eyes were closed. Her hands lay stretched out over the covers.

'I think I've got it,' the doctor was muttering to himself.

Pierce heard a clanging sound, like bells, striking against his head.

'The ambulance,' Mrs. Otis announced from the doorway. 'It's here.'

Pierce stared down at the bed.

'I got here just in time,' the doctor said, in a low voice.

The man looked familiar. At the Faculty Club. The University physician.

'Fortunately they always take too much,' he continued.

Mrs. Otis approached the doctor. 'The men are coming,' she told him.

Pierce stood motionless. There was nothing he could do — feel. Why — why had she done it? Had he —— He felt a hand on his arm, like a pressure against him. Mrs. Otis supporting him.

Two men entered the room with a stretcher. They laid Barbara upon it, rolled her in hot blankets, placed hot-water bottles at her feet, against her limbs. Pierce watched them with a fascination unlike anything he had ever experienced. Their appearance here, their gentle expertness, the way they turned the stretcher at the top of the stairs.

Hannah, the woman who had found Barbara, was crying in the hallway.

'You can come along in the ambulance,' the doctor said to Pierce. 'We're taking her to the hospital. By morning she'll be out of danger. Just a little rest — quiet. It's just as well she doesn't regain consciousness too soon.'

Pierce felt his way downstairs. It was like being a mourner in a funeral procession. But different. One felt nothing. Just as he had been told. Tragedy, when it comes, kills sensation at the first touch. He climbed into the ambulance, fixed his eyes upon the pale, sleeping face, felt himself moving swiftly through space.

That afternoon, when Mrs. Otis was telephoning Janet

the latest news from the hospital, Mary passed through the hall on her way upstairs. Janet saw at once she had heard nothing.

At her first words Mary let out a piercing shriek, but muffled it quickly with her hands, and started running toward her own room.

CHAPTER XVI

SPRING HARVEST

1

BARBARA had been removed to a sanitarium a few miles outside the city. Once a week Pierce was allowed a half-hour visit. She lay with closed eyes, too tired to open them even to look at him. When he took her hand, there was a slight responding pressure. Her hair, spread over her pillow, was like sunshine against the blue shadows of her face.

Senator Emerson telephoned Pierce every few days to come to his rooms in the hotel across the street from his club. Pierce both pitied and despised him. He tried to keep away, then weakened, spent an evening with him, and consequently a sleepless night afterward. From the father he got facts, terrifying facts, which had never been clear to him before. This blubbering man before him, who touched Pierce with his pudgy hands, and wept with self-pity as well as grief for his child, gradually revealed a story with ominous implications. Mrs. Emerson, that querulous woman with flashes of Barbara, had made her husband's life hell. Her alternations of excitement and depression, the months in a sanitarium devoted to mental diseases, the periods of partial recovery spent hating her husband — such was the history of their married life for more than ten years. He had tried to protect Barbara by keeping from her a knowledge of the nature of her mother's illness. He had sent her East to boarding-school, then abroad to a school near Paris, and finally to Wellesley to separate her from her mother. But the last two years, when Mrs. Emerson had appeared to be making a gradual recovery, she had insisted that only Barbara could make her well. Senator Emerson told the story

with sentimental details, interrupted by fits of crying. In disaster he had neither stoicism nor reserve. Pierce looked down at the floor.

The specialists, who babbled a foreign jargon of scientific terms when Pierce talked to them, would commit themselves to nothing. It was possible the patient was suffering a nervous breakdown brought on by mental strain. It was equally possible that she had inherited a predisposition for her mother's disease. They concluded their verdict by declaring for his consolation that Nature did strange things. Quiet, milk, eggs, cereals —— He wanted to kill them; fat, pink men, looking almost too clean. Like pigs in a butcher's shop, ready to be eaten.

But somehow their jargon made deep channels in his brain. He found himself repeating their formulæ to Janet when she made timid inquiries about Barbara, conscious of his glib facility and icy tones. Why were Janet and Keith afraid of him, afraid to let their eyes directly meet his? They begged him to eat with them, to accompany them on long walks, but when he pleaded other engagements, they looked relieved. At least Janet did. Keith talked — brilliantly if one could follow — in the realm of those abstractions which, for Pierce at least, no longer mattered. If they could bring him into the warmth of their lives, leave him less alone.

Even Mary Giddings, the valiant, slid past him in the hall. If they only wouldn't run away. If some one —— It was as if he were descending deeper every day into the extinct, ashy crater of a volcano. He couldn't endure much more of it.

He was drinking tea with Janet. She wanted to tell him something which came with great difficulty. It was about Mary. Mary was tortured with remorse, Janet said. As long as she lived, she would be haunted by her guilt in keeping her fears about Barbara to herself.

Janet stumbled. 'It wasn't what Barbara said. It was an intuition — she couldn't explain it. Then when —— '

He sat, one hand partly covering his face. It was hard

talking about her to any one, yet he wanted to talk. He plunged forward, holding his voice steady. 'It was she who first knew Barbara, wasn't it? Mary who brought her here? I'd forgotten.'

'Yes, it was Mary.'

'She has probably suffered greatly. I didn't think of that. I must talk to her some day — when I can.'

At last Pierce drove himself to waylay Mary in the upper hall. It was even harder than he thought.

'Barbara sent her love to you — to all of you here,' he began. 'The last time I saw her. I — I think she's a little better.'

Mary's eyes were shining with tears. She leaned against the staircase banisters. 'If — if I'd warned you,' she brought out in a husky voice.

Pierce took Mary's hand and shook it hard. Mary loved Barbara. The bristling manner which had once alienated him concealed deep affections. He hadn't appreciated her. Ugly women had seemed a mistake of nature. But there were other kinds of beauty. The beauty of intense loyalty like hers.

He still clung to her hand. Mary couldn't stand it any longer. Wrenching herself loose, she bounded up the attic stairs.

Pierce didn't blame her. He had been very kind. With the door locked behind her, she threw herself on the bed and permitted herself the relief of tears.

2

Keith's book had been finished a month ago.

'I suppose it's as good as I can make it,' he had said, pushing the last of the manuscript away from him with loathing. 'No use tinkering any longer. For this sketchy kind of thing it's all I can do.'

'Poor trash,' he called it. Some men could have written so hastily and been satisfied. Not he. After all the years he had worked. That excellent material. Well, no help for it.

Keith's gloom concerning what he had done hung ominously over Janet the day she carried the manuscript to the express office to dispatch it to Professor Trevor at Harvard. She tried to comfort herself with the reflection that, even if Keith didn't appreciate her efforts to help him, it was she who was saving him. But underneath her show of confidence trembled a tiny fear. What if — after all — Keith knew what was best?

'If your book's a failure,' she told him in the uncertain days which followed, 'I'm to blame, not you.'

To this, he said nothing, but looked even more depressed. Of course he was tired. What book just finished can bear the savage scrutiny of a worn-out author? If he could only settle down to work again, he would feel better. But he was too weary, he said, even to read. He wandered around the house aimlessly when he was through with his classes. At night he couldn't sleep. He got up and read poetry aloud to Janet, who would otherwise have been sleeping soundly. Sometimes the sensuous measures of Swinburne, chosen for their narcotic charms, brought sleep. Oftener they failed. Keith tried Greek next. But Æschylus wouldn't do. He ought to have known better.

Every day Janet watched for the mail-man. There were three deliveries: at eight, at noon, at four. Sometimes he was late. At last the plodding steps of that deliberate Government official in gray-blue, who clumped along like a packhorse without any realization of the fact that his arrival marked the hours of the day.

The longer they kept Keith's manuscript, the greater their interest, she argued. But why didn't Professor Trevor write something — that he had received it, that he had read the first chapter? Two weeks — three weeks — four weeks. Not a word.

All of this time Keith never mentioned his book. He spent his thought worrying about Pierce. It made Janet ashamed of herself. She, too, ought to lift her mind above personal fortunes. But she couldn't.

One afternoon when she went out on the verandah to peer into the letter-box, she saw Professor Field skating toward her. His skates were the first sign of spring at Chippewa, more authentic than an almanac. He waved and called out, 'I'm coming in to talk to you.'

A visit from Professor Field was unexpected flattery. He fled from all human creatures, even those he liked. One never suspected him of the usual mortal affections.

'I've come to ask about Miss Emerson,' he said, taking off his skates, and entering the house. It always looked strange to see Professor Field walking like other men. 'She studied the organ with me last year. But it was too vigorous. I advised her to give it up. She was so disappointed over not going on that I made a little bargain with her. Every week she was to send in a request for some special music to be played on Sunday. And she did. Every week I expected it. Sometimes she wanted the same thing over. Especially Bach. The Toccata and Fugue in D Minor. The Prelude and Fugue in D Major and the one in A Minor. Rousing music, as you know, reaching gigantic heights.'

'Yes, I remember you played the A Minor three times.'

'One's nerves — when they get sick—— Have they taught her to knit? There's nothing equal to it. I'm a great advocate of knitting for nervous disorders. Have they tried it?'

'I think not yet. They prescribe absolute rest.'

'But later. When one gets restless. One cannot always lie staring at the ceiling. I know how it was with me. I was very young — younger than she. Eighteen.' His mild eyes vacantly regarded the space before them. 'Studying music in Vienna. My head was so full —— full of the great masters Bach and Mozart, Beethoven, and full also of strange music — my own.' He rubbed his forehead with one long hand. 'I dreamed of being a composer then. I began to think myself great — great like Bach. And that is a dangerous fancy for any man. I got ill. Like her. It was too much. When I was better, they taught me to knit. Some monotonous labor. It made me well.'

Janet was conscious of his large eyes upon her. She had never known before what strange expression was in his face. That past in Vienna. His eccentricities, the knitting, the crocheting, the embroidery, the hooked rugs, the cooking, were forms of escape. Even the roller-skating, perhaps. One wondered about the order of that procession of interests in his life, the memories, the terrors.

'But I gave up the dream of being a composer for the organ,' he concluded. 'That was not for me. That world of imagination — so wonderful and terrible — I never dared afterward. I had to content myself playing the works of other men; teaching music, not making it.'

He gave his confession calmly. It was an old memory, this renunciation which had come before he was twenty. Professor Field was past fifty now. Close to sixty, some people said. And yet all that wonderful strength in his fingers, like a young man.

'When she is getting better — if I could go to the hospital and play for her. That would be a great comfort. Not long before she was taken ill I played César Franck's "Pièce Héroïque." You know it? Very soothing and reassuring. She came up afterward to thank me. She often did that. But this time — she was so earnest. It had done her so much good. Saved her, she said. Perhaps she was ill then.'

Professor Field started to go. He sat on the porch steps tightening the straps of his skates.

'I have played for sick people a good deal,' he said. 'After the war at the Government hospital. I know what to avoid, what overstimulates, what relaxes a weary mind. I learned all that many years ago. If where she is, they would allow me to try some of my sedative music —— '

'I'll ask and let you know.'

The second skate was now tight. Professor Field rose, bowed. 'If you'll do me that kindness, I'll be very grateful.'

He glided away in long, sweeping strides. Janet wondered if she would ever see anything amusing about Professor Field again.

3

Not a word from Harvard. The mail-man brought book catalogues, announcements of Birkheimer's post-Easter bargains, moving picture programs, but nothing else. Why didn't the Government prevent the waste of energy in the passage of such worthless matter through the mails? Some days Janet exercised heroic self-restraint by refusing to look for letters until dinner time. Then she got all at once the worthless litter out of the box near the front door.

The last week in April. No news. Then came the announcement of Chippewa promotions. Pierce had been made an associate professor. Mr. Nevins was now Keith's equal in rank. Janet had some bitter moments.

Of Pierce's good fortune, Keith said, 'If this could only have come when he would have enjoyed it.'

Several days passed before Janet could bring herself to congratulate Pierce. When at last she got the words out, he stared at her as if she had struck him in the face. He quickly recovered himself, thanked her, and passed on to humorous comments upon Nevins's elevation in rank.

'He's awfully set up about it. He's bought an automobile. I saw Mary taking her first ride.'

Mary was furious about Mr. Nevins's promotion. She told him he didn't deserve it.

'Why didn't Professor Masters promote *me?*' she demanded.

'You ought to have threatened to leave the way I did.'

Mary whistled. 'Jobs aren't so easy for women to find. Especially in state universities. Don't you know that, young man?'

Mr. Nevins didn't know it. He had never thought seriously about the position of women until he met Miss Giddings. She had given him considerable information on the subject, which he pondered in his heart.

'It's a beastly shame,' he stated fervently to all Mary's declarations of sex persecution.

Mary knew that she ought to look around for a job in a woman's college, now that she was getting her degree in June. There she'd have few men to compete against. But she knew nothing about women's colleges. In spite of her rancor against men, there was something invigorating about their presence. A place all women — somehow it promised to be tame.

She argued the question with Nevins. 'You'd better hang around,' he advised her. 'Maybe something'll happen. Now there's the car —— '

One couldn't remain angry at him. Motoring in the country in April offered some balm to an unpromoted instructor.

Mr. Nevins's advance, sadly enough, was not the deepest calamity of Mary's spring. On the campus she met Mrs. Field in purple, starting out for an afternoon of bridge. Mrs. Field closed her eyes in a wide smile. 'What's this I'm hearing about you, Miss Giddings?' She made a face designedly subtle, but to Mary merely silly. 'He's such a handsome young man' — Mary opened her mouth very wide — 'and literary too, Mrs. Witherspoon says.'

'What are you talking about?' demanded Mary.

'Your engagement to Mr. Nevins. I was told on the best authority.'

'I don't know how much authority I've got. But I'll tell you I'm not engaged to Mr. Nevins. What's more, I never shall be.'

'Everybody said —— ' Mrs. Field trickled off into weak apologies, terminated by Mary's unceremonious departure.

Mary was so angry that for a few yards she plunged forward without seeing where she was going. She wanted to howl like a mad child, to strike somebody. How dared they — how dared they — those fool faculty ladies, talk about her! She'd tell them — She began to plan crushing speeches.

She descended upon Janet, belatedly washing the lunch dishes.

'Do you know what people are saying about Mr. Nevins and me?'

Janet looked at her. 'What do you mean?'

'You've heard, then? That we're engaged?' She came and stood close to Janet, fixing her with accusing eyes. 'Did you, Janet Lamberton, ever for a moment think that I —— '

'Not exactly. I told them —— '

'What did you tell them?'

'That it wouldn't ever happen.'

'Did you say it as if you were sure?'

'As sure as —— Really, Mary, one can never be absolutely sure about such things.'

'What's that? Can't be sure? Haven't I told you often enough?'

'Yes, you have.' Janet chuckled. 'But even so —— '

'You thought I might be shooting off my head. Janet, I'm furious at you. The rest of them — idiots — idiots — I always knew they were idiots. Nothing better to do than gossip about what people are doing.' Mary flopped into a chair. 'I-I'll show them. I guess if I want to have a friend who happens to be a man instead of a woman —— '

'Of course,' Janet agreed.

'Don't I want a little fun sometimes? Not just work? Going out to a concert — a ride in the country? And Mr. Nevins has taught me more than any one else around here. Things I couldn't get myself. And if they think — just because they gabble about me — I told Mrs. Field ——'

'Poor Mr. Nevins! Didn't you leave a shred of uncertainty? He'll have Mrs. Kranich down on him. She'll start right in capturing him for Gretchen. An eligible young man — an assistant professor — the owner of a new car.'

'Well, I didn't. Let him look after himself. If he wants to be caught as so much loot —— '

Mary stamped out of the room. The next day she went motoring again with Mr. Nevins. Janet saw them from her post at the front window. She took up a novel and tried to read while she cast a watchful eye down the street. But even the lightest fiction from the circulating library couldn't hold her.

Marie Hanson drove past in her new Pierce-Arrow car. Its purchase had set all her circle agog once more. Surely Marie shook the wands of her fancy in the right place. In the front seat with her rode Mrs. Witherspoon. The Hanson tribe and Sylvia tumbled about in the tonneau, a confused bobbing of heads, hands, feet, turning motoring into scrimmage in the usual childish fashion. The children shouted and waved to all their faculty friends. Marie waved. Mrs. Witherspoon leaned back with the nonchalance of a general riding at the head of a triumphal procession.

Another week. The oak trees were beginning to leaf out. The tulips were in full bud. Still no letter. Almost daily the fate of every one Janet knew in the Chippewa colony was becoming settled. All but hers, hers and Keith's.

Harold Colfax had been promoted. Lily came shouting the good news. Lily, successful, made shivers of repulsion go down one's backbone. Some day she'd be as bad as Mrs. McGill bragging about her husband.

Next came the announcement that Paul Early's book had been taken by a New York publisher. Helen was ecstatic over it. That book for which they had slaved all these years paid for by some one else. Their thousand dollars safe in the bank. Talk about miracles! What was to be done with it? At first Helen inclined to a baby. But Paul urged a summer in Europe. Children could be postponed until later. Finally Europe triumphed, and they were at present scurrying around to get the best tourist third-class accommodations left at so late a date.

Anna Montgomery was the last of the trio to be professionally established. Outwardly she remained very calm, her neat braids and quiet eyes just as they had always been, as she listened to the raptures of her friends. Then her turn came. A friend of her father's at Ann Arbor was consulted about an opening at Amherst. Robert's name was mentioned. All the spring letters had passed back and forth.

Anna came over to tell Janet that Robert was going to Am-

herst. After the months of suspense it was a relief to talk openly.

'There were times when I actually envied Lily and Helen,' she confessed with a frankness which made Janet blush. 'I can only begin to rejoice with them now. Poor dear Lily, I almost hated her sometimes. It's such a terrible struggle for all of us — a life-and-death struggle. It makes us so tense — so hard. We care for nothing but ourselves. What our husbands get out of it — position, salary. When I tell Robert that, he appears so surprised. To the best men in the midst of exacting work, there are so many other kinds of satisfaction. It's doing a job well — not getting somewhere. But we wives ——'

'They will never understand the difference.' Janet shook her head.

'I tell Robert that having our own home for the first time will be a great joy. We're going to have a real house — two floors. Going upstairs to sleep,' she laughed, 'a state ceremony. And a comfortable mattress and springs after years of lumpy beds.'

Janet had never forgotten her first vivid impression of those rooms in the Evan's house in which Robert and Anna were crowded together. Only a woman of Anna's fine balance and self-control could have managed. She cooked three meals a day on a gas-plate hidden away in a closet, dark without ventilation, her china and cooking utensils spread out over some rude shelves. Four years of petty economy monotony, self-discipline.

Anna, who loved a dignified order in life, was at last coming into her own. She had concealed her poverty with humor; had embroidered a dull existence with her colorful fancy. Her confidence in Robert's brains had made her sure everything would come out right in the end.

Janet saw the straight line of Anna's future, saw her blossoming into the gracious hostess, becoming one of the most important persons at Amherst, probably more important than her serious, hard-working, and somewhat awkward husband.

The Slaters seemed to be jogging along once more. There was no gossip about a divorce. Mr. Slater's book was being published by the Chippewa Press, much to Keith's disgust. But a book about Russia, even if it wasn't much, was bound to attract attention. So the Press, an uncritical printing business at best, had risked the expense.

When Professor Page returned from a philosophic conference held in New York at Easter time, he brought back direct news of Spencer. Spencer had read a paper which had aroused a good deal of discussion. The men from Johns Hopkins spoke with enthusiasm about his future. A conceited fellow, Bohemian in his ways, but brilliant. His book would be out in a year or two, he told his colleagues. They were proud to have him in Baltimore. They would keep him if they could.

Professor Page had not spoken to Spencer. In spite of the fact that they sat in the same room at some of the smaller meetings and were separated by only one chair at a dinner, they had not exchanged a word.

'I don't think he wanted to see me,' Professor Page explained. 'So I let him alone. He looks just the same. A little more abstracted, perhaps, uncared-for. It's only natural he shouldn't want to be reminded of Chippewa.'

4

Pierce sat on the sofa with Janet. He didn't know how long he had been there. He had returned from his weekly visit to the sanitarium, the most agonizing he had yet experienced. Yes, Barbara was better, he reported to Janet, much better, even beyond the doctor's expectations. In spite of this favorable turn in her condition, he was plunged into despair deeper than any he had yet suffered.

Barbara had exacted a painful promise. Measuring him with eyes which made deception impossible, she had said: 'They tell me I'm improving — that I'll soon be well. But other people ——' By other people she had meant her mother. 'Promise me ——' She held his hand in a tight grip. 'Promise

that you'll never marry me while there's the least danger. Years maybe — when I'm perfectly well. Promise me you won't urge me against my better judgment.'

So he promised, feeling, as he spoke the words, that he was pronouncing his doom and hers, that they would never marry. Now he sat chained to Janet's sofa, like a steer tied with ropes for the slaughtering pen, unable to escape. Janet was as silent as he. Unconsciously he was aware of strain in her quietness, of worry about something. She stared out of the window, turned suddenly, as if roused to his presence beside her, then began to talk very fast.

Keith entered the room. Pierce, startled, leaped to his feet. '— I didn't hear you come in,' he stammered.

Janet started toward Keith. 'Is it — is it from him?'

Keith passed her a letter. Pierce watched her face, yellow in its pallor, change as she read. She looked as she had a year ago — two years ago almost — that first night he had come into the house. She was like grey embers caught by the wind and changed to leaping flame.

'Oh,' she breathed, 'how splendid, how splendid it is!'

'A letter from Trevor,' Keith explained, taking the chair beside Pierce. At the familiar name Pierce roused himself again. 'They seem to be losing their standards at Harvard. Even Trevor. It's about my book — the letter. Trevor, it seems, takes it seriously.'

Janet held out the letter in an ecstatic gesture. Keith passed it on to Pierce. 'See for yourself,' he commanded.

Janet fell back on the sofa.

'All this fuss about that weak book of mine,' Keith went on.

Pierce, reading the typewritten pages, began to sieze their meaning. Harvard considered Keith's book a brilliant piece of scholarship. The Harvard Press wanted to publish it. They must have Keith at Harvard, offered him tempting courses, a good salary.

'Poor Trevor!' said Keith. 'He's getting old. Close to seventy.'

Pierce realized he must say something. It was difficult to

raise himself to the level of polite enthusiasm concerning that material side of life which meant so little to him. But this was a magnificent chance for Keith. A kind of tutorship of picked undergraduates who would study all phases of eighteenth-century life was what they were immediately offering him, with lectures in the graduate school the following year. He must let old Keith know how glad he was.

He held out his hand and gripped Keith's. 'It's splendid — splendid,' he said, repeating Janet's words. Then he turned to her. She was leaning forward and staring at Keith. 'You're the one responsible for this.' He shook her hand. She seemed unconscious of what he was saying.

Pierce knew that Janet wanted him to go, but he couldn't lift himself from the sofa. What did it matter anyhow? Janet so excited — her eyes, wild, restless. No, he couldn't go. She had accomplished all this for her husband, made him write a book he didn't want to write. A good book. Anything Keith touched would be good. By skimming off the cream from years of labor he had produced a volume which, to quote Trevor, 'promised great things for the future.' Promised — all these promising young men. Where do they go? One never hears of them again. They don't die. One dazzling flare, and then nothing. What snuffs out the fire? Keith, too. One more of those promising young men. With so little competition, even when he did less than his best. What man could withstand the forces of mediocrity, hold himself to self-made standards few people were capable to comprehend?

'I suppose I'll have to accept,' Keith murmured, taking the letter and tossing it on the table beside him.

Janet turned upon him. 'You mean you don't want to go?'

Keith kept his eyes away from Pierce. To leave him at a time like this! All these weeks he had observed his friend with the hopeless intensity of one watching a slow, bleeding death, drop by drop. But there was no help. He must go. He was no good here.

'It's the only place for you.' Pierce tried to bring fervor into his tones.

'If you were going with us ——' Keith's voice was hoarse.

Pierce twisted his face into a smile. 'Chippewa's good enough for me. At least no worse than other places. I don't want to be a scholar. There's nothing much I do want. So you see ——' He laughed, a short, bitter laugh. 'We'll try out some of your dreams — old boy! You train up a younger generation a little better than the present at Harvard. And I here. Then perhaps my descendants can have the literary life I once thought I longed for.'

Keith leaned back in his chair. All the way to the house he had kept thinking of the remorseless sacrifice of years of his life to make this book. He hated it. He hated himself. He had sold his highest powers to get on in the world. It was finished — all that horrible business. At Harvard they would pay him enough to keep going. Once there, the real book. No matter how many years, how much drudgery. Never again less than his best. Let them talk. All of them.

He rose from his chair. He must get at it. Right away. He felt strong forces pulling him down, keeping him from it. He must get started. No time to lose. Before anything more happened.

'Where are you going? Darling ——' Janet's fingers touched him as he passed by the sofa.

'To work,' he said. 'I'm going to start it right away. To-day. The book I wanted to write.' He took a stride forward, then turned, and stood facing them. 'I think it will take about ten years.'

The two on the sofa listened to the retreating footsteps. They heard the study door close behind him.

With the closing of the door, Pierce experienced a curious elation. Keith had seen the danger in time. Keith would be a great man. At Chippewa he had known three great men. Spencer. His wife was dead. Porter lived out at the Observatory alone. And Keith, with the door of his study closed behind him —— Janet — did she know? She came so close to being a splendid woman. Charm, beauty, a measure of brains. But not enough. This near intelligence in women —

but without discipline, real understanding, or wisdom. Women were too ambitious — the best of them — unwilling to wait — demanded miracles. Poverty had forced Janet into interfering. Poor woman! A little more courage, and what a wife she would have been! He pitied her. Even if she didn't know what she had done.

'Isn't it like Keith to start a new book the day he gets through with this one?' he laughed by way of comfort. 'A real scholar — that husband of yours. You'll be more and more proud of him.'

Janet sat opening and shutting her cold fingers. The end of her waiting. Well, she'd done it. She'd saved him. Everything had come out even better than her hopes. But somehow, as Keith left the room, she wasn't happy. How tasteless success was after all!

Pierce rose from the sofa. Now, when it was too late, when it didn't matter. She reached for Professor Trevor's letter, folded it carefully, put it back in the envelope. She sitting here alone. Keith in his study.

5

Keith in his Doctor's gown and Janet in a white frock to honor a perfect June morning were walking toward the library, where the academic procession formed and marched across the campus to the Armory for the Commencement exercises. Mary, impatient to join the other candidates receiving their degrees, had started on ahead. The preceding day Pierce had departed for a week's stay at a farm-house near Barbara's sanitarium. She was so much stronger that he could make brief daily visits.

At the corner Janet turned to look back at the row of red-brick houses. After tedious delay the Legislature had voted the necessary appropriations for the new Science Buildings. During the summer the old houses would be torn down. The neighbors were in great excitement. All of them must hurriedly seek fresh shelter. Her home for two years — it would be the first to go, every one said. All of her married life —

that time when everything momentous had happened — the Seeley house razed to the ground — not a brick left to show for it — two years melting away like a dream.

Keith, not noticing that she had paused, walked straight on. She took a few running steps, caught his arm. She had him. She would cling to him while all the rest was going.

On such a day the campus gave up its everyday air. The fountain played in front of the Physics Building. The snowballs and bridal-wreath flanking the Governor's statue, the flower beds of geraniums and daisies, the hedge of rosebushes had reached an appropriate climax of bloom. The sidewalks were crowded with visitors on their way to the Armory: parents looking a little confused; girls in summer hats and frocks; young men in new straw hats. Groups of seniors strutted along with all the importance of a day belonging exclusively to them.

On the Library steps, with a classical background of pillars, frieze, and Greek inscription, the girls of the senior class in white dresses under their black gowns, enlivened by sheaves of roses, were taking snap-shots of one another. The men looked a little sheepish in motar-boards and a generous flow of skirt. In front of them assembled a nervous flock of professors in silk robes, gold-tasselled caps, and brilliant silk hoods. Professor McIntosh's scarlet University of Edinburgh gown and the gorgeous German tri-chevron upon hoods of purple, yellow, red, blue, green, combined to make a display equalled in a democratic country by nothing except an ecclesiastical festival or a lodge parade.

As they climbed the steps, Wee Tom, jumping up and down beside his mother and James, plucked at Keith's gown. 'Hello, there,' he said.

'Where are *your* Scotch colors?' Keith asked him.

Wee Tom grinned. James darted off to look for his friend Billy Wendell, who had promised to be on hand to see the show with him.

'What's this about your running off to Harvard?' demanded Dolly McIntosh, hatless, her hair blown about in the

wind. She had left her experiments only long enough to watch the procession start off, and wore her usual working clothes. 'Here I was planning that you were going to help educate my two sons.'

Keith gave Tom a brotherly dig in the ribs. 'I'm certainly sorry to go off and leave this young man. I had promised myself the fun of keeping an eye on him. He'll have to come to Harvard some day. Will you, Tom?'

'Sure thing.'

'There'll never be money enough for that,' his mother interrupted.

'I guess I can earn money, can't I? I'm going to Harvard, I say. Nobody can stop me.'

'That's what he told his father as soon as he heard you were leaving. "I'm going to Harvard with Mr. Lamberton." But now he understands he must wait a little.'

'There won't be many there like him,' Janet said.

Dolly gave her son a clumsy pat, to which he responded with violent pulls at her skirt. For some reasons, unknown to most faculty wives, the McIntosh boys adored their mother.

Keith left them to join his colleagues already forming in line, and Tom, spying his friend Bertie Page through the crowd, dashed toward him.

The procession was ready to start. Marshals paced up and down making a last official examination of the giggling senior class in the rear and setting belated stragglers in order. Bertie and Tom were leaping up and down in nervous excitement to get started as soon as the band began to play.

As the line made its initial quiver, Mr. Nevins sauntered toward Janet. He wore a summer suit of light grey, almost white, which set off the squareness of his shoulders and the length of his trim legs. He carried a new Panama hat with a blue band.

'Are you going to the exercises?' he asked. 'May I join

you, then? I told Miss Giddings I intended to see how she behaved.'

Mrs. McIntosh, Mrs. Page, and the two boys hurried on ahead of the line. Janet and Mr. Nevins followed more deliberately. Past the Governor's statue marched the band, the faculty, the endless ranks of graduating students from all the colleges. The sunshine caught the colors, mingled them with the black gowns, the oaks, the expanse of grass; the breeze took up the notes of the band, the robins, the blackbirds, the murmur of the crowd. Across the campus the long line advanced. The visitors fell in behind. Professors and students surged up the inclined brick walk leading through the entrance arch and into the Armory. The others straggled in after them.

The Armory, constructed for the military training of Chippewa undergraduates, was the only place of assembly large enough in the present giant stage of the University. Its interior was so huge and bleak that the flags and palms used to soften its brick-walled monstrosity were like ribbons tied around the neck of a circus elephant. But there was something impressive in the rows and rows of black-gowned figures filling the centre of the hall. Almost a thousand students receiving degrees that day. In number the size of most Chippewa villages. The financial sacrifice of parents, the effort of teachers, the work of students themselves. A good part self-supporting. All that concentration upon education, the hope of America. A pathetic hope. So few even dream of what real education means. The huge lower floor, the galleries, were crowded. The President occupied one of the highbacked chairs on the platform, the distinguished visitor making the address, the other. Behind them sat the deans of the different colleges. In the third rank the faculty.

Janet and Mr. Nevins were ushered into chairs reserved for the faculty families. She nodded to friends on all sides. Lily Colfax, looking handsomely triumphant, waved.

During the opening music, Janet glanced up toward Keith. In his academic regalia he had the air of a fine gentleman

of the *ancien régime* in court dress looking out upon the ordinary world with slightly amused detachment. The other men appeared what they were, hard worked scholars, administrators, teachers, weary at the end of a college year and decidedly bored at having to dig their Doctors' gowns out of a trunk in the attic and offer themselves up for platform decoration.

The address, the expected eulogy of ideals, learning, sent Janet's mind wandering. She was making her farewell to Chippewa. One part of her life was passing away. She made imaginary farewells to her friends, sold furniture, packed trunks, left Chippewa forever. Even her home, torn down after her—what she had worked so hard to make. Could time, happiness, suffering be wiped out that way? One's mistakes wiped out?

There was restlessness in the senior class. They wanted to tumble out upon a waiting world.

The President had risen to confer the degrees, a tedious procedure. First the honorary degrees and the necessary eulogies. Next degrees for the doctors of philosophy.

The roll of unfamiliar names, unfamiliar responses. Most were men, awkward and self-conscious. Harold Colfax reached the President in two giant strides, stumbled on the steps in getting off the platform. At last the President's voice sang out: 'Mary Ann Giddings.' There was great applause. Only two women getting Doctors' degrees that day. The crowd clapped, pounded its feet against the floor. Mary, with an expression of grim victory, her plumply calved legs moving with soldierly tread, advanced to the place of honor in front of the President. In her erect bearing one felt the momentousness of the end of a long struggle. She clutched at the precious piece of paper, held it before her for a second like a lighted candle, made her swift bow, and hurried off the platform.

Mr. Nevins was still clapping. 'Isn't she magnificent?' he said to Janet. 'Simply magnificent.'

More names. Then John Elroy Slater. His face wore a

correct smile. He minced toward the chief executive of Chippewa in his carefully polite way, made an excessive obeisance, passed on deliberately to join Mary and the rest. Janet did not dare look around to see if Clara were there.

Only that morning she had noticed Slater's book lying on Keith's desk. She had picked it up and carelessly turned the pages. The dedication read 'TO MY WIFE', in which he repeated the conventional Chippewa formula. It was all a man could do. In most cases a wife had done the typewriting, the index, helped with the bibliography, even though she might not comprehend the weight of her husband's knowledge. For such labor she was rewarded with a dedication, and often her husband's devotion and admiration. But for women like Clara, long outgrown emotionally and intellectually, such a dedication seemed more like an obituary, an obituary to dead love, dead faithfulness.

The conferring of degrees went on and on, doctors, masters, now bachelors, filing past the President like endless droves of sheep, without name, without honor. Between Janet and the whitehaired President the black figures were like spots before tired eyes, like motes in a sunbeam.

Keith's book, that work which she had brought into being, her book really, an abortive enterprise which her husband hated——She decided, seeing before her suddenly the Slater book, that Keith's should appear without dedication. She made her judgment swiftly, and it brought a faint breath of relief. Since that day of the Harvard letter she had passed through much suffering, with alternate moods of anger against Keith and of aching despair. At first she could not understand his ingratitude, his resentment, not against her, but against himself for using his powers to advance his worldly fortunes. He had come out a little at a time in harsh invective at his desecration of knowledge. In the painful hours since that day she had vowed repeatedly that never would she interfere with him again.

To-day she began dimly to understand Keith's badly concealed suffering. She had intruded into the sacred world

of her husband's mind, soiled it with unworthy aims, fretting worries. From now on she must stay outside. In the stifling heat of the crowded room she shivered and choked back a moaning cry.

A world of the mind. Once she thought she understood—that this world was for her. But knowing Keith, knowing Spencer had showed her that it was different from her conception. It held the treasure of immortal things. Those within had sacrificed comfort, food, sleep, money to keep themselves untainted. They jealously guarded this world, kept out intruders. Those outside were bewildered by the fierce zeal for ideas, the quenchless desire for pure beauty. They desired a sound roof, plenty of food, undisturbed sleep, the approval of the multitude. She, Keith's wife, had desired these things. She was outside. Most women were outside. Not because they were women. Mrs. McIntosh—Mary even — stood on the edge, not quite within, nor entirely without the barriers. Many men were outside. Most Chippewa men. But the best of them — Porter — Field — Spencer — Olafson — Keith — yes, Pierce — the men who make universities. Seldom the men with the highest salaries. They were not afraid because rare creation, what they created themselves or honored in others, like an orchestra struggling to interpret the genius of a master, brought no comfort nor material reward. Only harsh judgment, derision, hatred. Often a worn-out body. Sometimes an early grave.

The band began to play once more. There was confusion, a shifting in chairs, turning this way and that. The procession formed a second time and marched out of the building.

Automatically Janet was talking to Mr. Nevins, smiling.

'Where shall we find Mary?' he was saying. 'I want to congratulate her right away.'

Pushing their way out of the crowded building, they found her with Keith and the Pages, all of them talking and laughing together in high spirits. Bertie and Tom were circling around at a safe distance.

'Well—well,' Mary shouted to them, 'it's over at last.

I've done it. Keith says I'm a different woman already.'

Mary, still wearing her triumphant air, treated Mr. Nevins, for all his summer suit and new hat, with a marked condescension.

On the outskirts of the throng hovered Mrs. Porter, staring in all directions in a dazed way. Her white dress and white hat covered with bristling feathers gave her an even more pathetic aspect than usual. Janet left the others to go and speak to her.

'Where is Mr. Porter?' she inquired, after an exchange of greetings. 'I didn't see him on the platform.'

'Out at the Observatory. He's always there — won't stop off work for anything.' She looked at Janet with her blinking, expressionless eyes. 'I just heard about your leaving us. Just when I was getting to know you a little. It's a shame. But it's always that way here. If I like people, they always go away.' She shook her head. 'I'm never going to let myself grow fond of any one again.'

'Oh, you must,' Janet urged. 'There's always some one better coming along.' She spoke brightly to break Mrs. Porter's drooping gloom.

'No, there won't be,' the older woman contradicted. 'If you'd stayed, there'd been some one.'

Mrs. Porter was a desolate, lonely woman, the wife of an important man. There is probably, Janet thought, no greater loneliness that that. She and Mrs. Porter — she had never considered herself joined to Mrs. Porter before. They were both lonely women. It was their destiny. A noble destiny, most people would say. Janet, standing in the sunshine of a matchless June day, pondered. If she could do it over, would she choose any other? It was hard to decide, very hard. She took Mrs. Porter's hand, clasped it between hers. She and the wife of the astronomer walked on together; Keith, Mary, and Mr. Nevins, still chattering gaily, a little way behind.

THE END

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